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**The Contribution of Drama in Education to
Discourse-Making and Language Development
in the Foundation Stage Curriculum**

by

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

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Abstract

The importance of early childhood education in children's social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development is only recently gaining coinage in the formal education system in the UK, despite the fact that extensive research has been conducted in the fields of child development and child psychology for many years. Such studies reveal the importance of a child-centred, humanising education in the development of the young child, and pay particular attention to the role and value of language acquisition and meaningful language use in the holistic education of young children.

Against the background of a newly introduced early years curriculum in the UK (2000), this study traces the historical origin of early childhood education and the socio-cultural, political and economic factors that impact upon its delivery and implementation in various curricula, both nationally and internationally. The recent Foundation Stage curriculum document (2000) identifies language, play and human interaction as tools not only for the development of personal, social and linguistic skills but also as key processes of learning and teaching in early childhood education. However, in the absence of a well developed methodology and with insufficient Early Years training for the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000), language teaching and learning is generally regarded more as a preparation for the formal school curriculum rather than in the context of discourse and communication for the development of personal and social skills. This situation has led to a considerable degree of professional conflict and insecurity amongst Early Years practitioners about the aims of the new curriculum and its implementation.

The thesis argues that young children develop holistically (cognitively, personally and socially) through the medium of 'speech' and 'discourse', and that language is a social construct and a product of human culture. Therefore in early years, language and literacy development cannot be separated from the child's social world and the focus, in terms of teaching and learning, should be on discourse-making: the making, negotiation and development of rules, terms and conditions of the child's social world. This can offer children the linguistic resources they need to be confident and secure in familiar and unfamiliar environments and to problem-solve, organise and maintain their social worlds. The thesis argues that play and well structured Drama in Education activities can provide opportunities for meaningful communication and discourse. Drawing from the research findings, a model to structure and develop children's play for personal, social and linguistic development through Drama in Education is proposed. It will be shown that drama contains interactive tools and meaningful forms of learning which can assist teachers to create living contexts and fictitious worlds with the children within which the different functions of language can be identified and developed.

Introduction

The field of early childhood education has long been neglected in the United Kingdom. It only recently gained the status of having its own designated curriculum (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, 2000), despite the fact that over the years it has received greater attention in the fields of child development and child psychology (David, 1998) than the other sectors in the education system. Ongoing research indicates that language, play, narrative and human interaction are key processes of learning in early childhood education (Pestalozzi, 1826, Dewey, 1956; 1963; 1966, Froebel in Kilpatrick, 1916, Montessori, 1912; Isaacs, 1930; 1933, Piaget, 1952; 1954, and Vygotsky, 1962). It is encouraging to note that this view is also reflected in the new Early Years curriculum (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage, 2000). However, the fundamental difficulty as identified by David (1998), owing to insufficient research being conducted in this particular area of early childhood education, is the lack of a well developed methodology which would support teachers and practitioners in their use of play and narrative in the development of children's language skills in Early Years environments. This poses considerable challenges to Early Years teachers in their attempts to realise the aims of the new curriculum. Observations, teaching experience and informal discourse with practitioners reveals the limited extent to which these valuable teaching methods are currently being employed in Early Years settings. Play is generally regarded as a spontaneous or a simulation activity, and narrative is often delivered as a transmission style activity during a fixed period in the daily teaching and learning routine.

In schools and Early Years settings language development is regarded as a relatively stable system, and signs as arbitrary and stable conjunctions of meaning and form (Coulmas, 1997; Kress, 1997). This appears to be an outcome from earlier influences in the 1950s and 1960s where a possible misinterpretation of the developmental stages of Piaget (1954) and Chomsky's (1957; 1965) language acquisition devices led to pedagogies and curricula in England which were mismatched to the potential, ability and disposition of the child learner (Kress, 1997; Donaldson, 1978). As a result, language teaching and learning in early childhood education meant preparation for the formal school curriculum, and its practice involved the acquisition of language in the form of a set of isolated elements, such as word meaning and phonetic awareness (Donaldson, 1978). However, in the development of the child as a social being, knowing words, how to pronounce them, what they mean, and how to put them into sentences is only a small part of learning a language (Kress, 1994). According to the various social theories of language (Gee, 1999; Kress, 1985, 1997; Halliday, 1975; Vygotsky, 1962 and Bruner, 1990) and the disciplines of Discourse Analysis and Drama in Education, the distinction between the terms language development and literacy development signifies that the latter is about the use of language, effective communication, responsiveness to the needs of others, understanding, and questioning the world in which we live. In this context, theorists and educators argue that in social play, playful talk and narrative can support the evolution of graphic representation whether in drawing, reading or writing (Vygotsky, 1978; Gardner and Wolf, 1983). Through the support of talk, play becomes a kind of 'canvas' on which young children can collaboratively symbolise ideas and feelings (Fleming,

1997 and Fein, 1987). Booth (1994:31) offers ways that “narrative shares with the inner and outer storytelling that play a major role in the child’s sleeping and waking life”.

The socialising idea therefore, implies a curriculum aimed at preparing children as adequately as possible for the life they are likely to lead; it will focus on developing the skills and knowledge that are relevant ‘to real life’ outside the school (Egan, 1997). This curriculum will need to be responsive to changes in society and address topics that interest and concern young people, such as family life, citizenship, environment and other features of the social life pupils are entering. In this context any form of narrative (story, story telling, traditional tale, myth) is a product of human culture, it contains dramatic events and its use, in education, can facilitate children’s learning in various playful ways: to create fictitious context for learning, to stimulate children’s engagement with the fictitious context and as a dramatic convention which will motivate further action in and out of fiction (Egan, 1997; Neelands, 1990; 1992, Bolton and Heathcote, 1999; Booth, 1994) .

As an Early Years teacher and a drama teacher for many years, I recognise the need for grounded theory about how children develop their linguistic potential, in order to understand how to work more meaningfully through the medium of drama: whether one is actually engaged in specialist drama classes or within an Early Years setting. My own experiences confirmed the significant role and value that well structured drama activities can play in the holistic education of young children, both as an artistic experience for the learners, but also, more importantly in this context, as a highly effective learning medium across the Early Years curriculum. These experiences

pointed convincingly to the significant but often untapped pedagogic value of drama in the development of children's language skills, but equally, their social, emotional and cognitive development because "in all dramatic activities, conversation, argument, interrogation, description and discussion are crucial elements which form a necessary part of the way in which everyone thinks and orders their understanding" (O'Sullivan, 1998).

The motivation to undertake formal research in this area was prompted by a keen interest in children's linguistic, personal and social capacities: for example, how young children 'make-meaning', and the linguistic qualities and social skills they bring to their discourse when they create and use the play space and objects symbolically in their fictitious worlds. In the context of literacy development, a drama teacher sees the curriculum subjects as living contexts, the child as a whole entity and through the medium of drama, facilitates a holistic approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum. Brian Woolland (1993) contends that to teach drama you have to work with other subject areas. It gives greater purpose to both drama and to the areas it is working alongside: "It gives a reason for learning". Jonothan Neelands (1992:9) insists that "drama is an important means of constructing and experiencing the social contexts within which the different functions of language can be identified and developed". The challenge is to find a way to transfer this experience from the domain of specialist drama classes into Early Years settings, where generalist teachers can create living contexts and fictitious worlds with their children, in different learning areas so that through the medium of drama children's meaning-making processes in play will facilitate their language development in a meaningful manner. The aim of this research therefore, is to work towards developing a

methodology which draws upon best practice in the field of drama in education, and which involves children in the creation of imaginative contexts for authentic language development and use in an Early Years setting. It is intended to demonstrate that teaching and learning through drama significantly supports children's language development through the provision of meaning-making opportunities during structured play.

The thesis explores the development of children's language with particular emphasis on 'speech' and 'discourse', and adopts the perspectives that language is a social and cultural construct, and teaching and learning about language is teaching and learning about the world (Halliday, 1975; Vygotsky, 1978, Bruner, 1990; Heathcote, 1984; Neelands, 1992; Wooland, 1993 and Bolton; 1992). Ian Bowater (McCaslin, 1981) contends that drama can offer 'an alternative curriculum'. It places the child at the centre of the learning experience, and allows them to build their own bridges of understanding. Adopting the position that a curriculum therefore about language should also be teaching about the world rather than demarcating language as a separate slot on the timetable labelled 'grammar' or 'knowledge about language', raises the following questions: what is meaning-making in children's language development? How do children make meaningful connections with the world through play? How do social theorists, drama practitioners and various national and international Early Years curricula describe the process of teaching and learning language? Addressing these questions necessitates a study of the fields of child psychology and child language acquisition in order to propose a model for working in Early Years settings through drama. Such a model would operate on the premise that drama is central to the whole education of a child in the

early years environment. "It is a social activity: we learn by exchanging and refining descriptions of our experiences" (O'Sullivan, 1998). Dorothy Heathcote (McCaslin, 1981) believes that drama functions as a way of making the world simpler and more understandable.

This thesis maintains that "Drama is not only a subject and a method for teaching but a means of learning, a pedagogy, whose implications reach all aspects of school life. Cross curricular drama activities can help in the carrying out of tasks and also contribute to general intellectual growth, and to personal development" (O'Sullivan, 1998). It is hoped that the development of a model of practice based upon this understanding of drama will support Early Years practitioners in their subsequent implementation of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000). This document contains useful general guidelines about the development of children's language but does not contain detailed practical advice about how to implement these guidelines, nor is it supported by a clear identification of theoretical underpinnings of language acquisition. Some definitions offered here of language learning in social contexts will suggest discourse-making as a holistic approach that involves behaviour and inter-personal relationships.

Research methods

The thesis presents the crystallisation of a qualitative research process. It uses multiple theoretical paradigms to interpret how the concept of meaning is communicated through language in social, cultural and educational studies. The study draws upon and uses the approach of phenomenology

and cultural studies, and includes a review of literature in relevant disciplines, narrative and textual analysis of authoritative documents, and practitioner research applied to a case study within a particular institutional setting. The social science perspective adopted throughout the thesis views the examination of the material (narrative and literature review) as subjective rather than as an objective undertaking (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This means that throughout the thesis my relationship with the material, the way I view language, is also influenced by the symbolic interactionist perspective (Mead, 1934), which views language as symbols with which human beings interpret the social world. Moreover, the thesis serves as a means of interpreting the phenomenon of language in specific contexts and historical moments in time, for example, the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000), the Reggio Emilia experience and the Coventry document (2000). Thus its general purpose is to understand the educational reality behind the portrayal of language in Early Years curricula as reflected in these documents, through the eyes of educators in the field of social science (Gee, 1999; Halliday, 1975; Vygotsky, 1978 and Bruner, 1990) and curriculum writers.

Outline of chapters

Chapter One contains a literature review of the social theories of language. This serves to explore the phenomenon of language in the early stages of development (pre-school years) from a social and cultural perspective. The chapter looks at children's language acquisition and how children make sense of the world. It aims to build a framework about Early Years language, which will also serve to theoretically underpin the arguments cited

in later chapters.

In Chapter Two the literature review serves two purposes:

- 1) to distinguish Drama in Education as a paradigm for teaching and learning about the world, from Drama as 'text', part of the study of dramatic literature, and from Theatre as a performing art and a cultural space. This is needed in order to establish the importance of using this methodology in teaching the Early Years curriculum;
- 2) to establish how meaning operates in action. In this context, the understanding of language tools that motivate action and offer suggestions for practical teaching considerations through the paradigm of Drama in Education is viewed from the point of view of Hermeneutics. As Gadamer (1970:87) explains "understanding is not an isolated activity of human beings but a basic structure of our experience of life". The chapter views meaning as mediated through social and cultural negotiation. Schwandt (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:195) clarifies the point by viewing meaning through the lenses of Hermeneutics: "meaning not necessarily as constructed (i.e. created, assembled) but as negotiated (i.e. a matter of coming to terms)".

The literature review in Chapter Three outlines the socio-historical context of Early Years education since the seventeenth century, with a view to identifying past influences from the traditions of psychology on language development, parenting, human behaviour and the political issues that underpin teaching and learning. The identification of individual and collective historical and social situations which affected the contemporary Early Years practice (Fullan, 1991) serves two purposes in this chapter:

1. to understand the sociohistorical background of the current Early Years curriculum (2000). Which pedagogical views and ideas may have

influenced the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000)?

2. to understand and interpret the language and ideas that underpin practice in the authoritative Early Years documents (Foundation stage, 2000; Reggio Emilia and Coventry document, 2000) and support their comparative study in the following chapter.

Chapter Four is a comparative study of three models of teaching and learning in Early Years. Through textual analysis of authoritative documents the chapter looks at the language of texts to reveal the social, political, cultural and pedagogical issues which affect practice in situational contexts. The study of how teaching and learning language is facilitated in three different cultural domains informs the development, from a theoretical and practical perspective in chapter five, of a pedagogy for enhancing literacy in the Early Years Curriculum in England and Wales.

Chapter Five serves two purposes. Firstly, it describes a practitioner research approach in a particular Early Years setting where the researcher attempted to apply theory and practice, as revealed in this study, to change existing practice in the setting and develop a methodology for enhancing literacy. Secondly, it proposes a model (long and medium term plans) which aims to offer Early Years practitioners a way of interpreting the current curriculum guidelines in the United Kingdom in order to enhance the teaching and learning of language. The short term plan explicates the use of story and the 'Mantle of the Expert' dramatic conventions as "narrative actions" (Neelands, 1990:21), in order to stimulate meaningful discourse between teachers and pupils in a fictitious social context and offer pupils responsibility over their learning. The model proposed is presented as work in progress, and indications of its future development are suggested in the final chapter, The Way Forward.

Chapter One

Social theories of Language

**Identifying the key theoretical foundations of the
'discourse-making' process in Early Years Language**

1.1 Introduction and Methodology

In this chapter I am going to explore the social languages that children use to communicate in their worlds in order to devise a theoretical framework to underpin a developing model for language in Early Years. Although traditionally, language for children under five is seen as constrained by stages of intellectual development (see Piaget, 1967; 1971; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969), this chapter proposes that children 'actively' construct their knowledge of the world through both spontaneous and contrived social interactions with more mature members of their community. The chapter looks at the social theories of language that assist teachers in learning about language as 'discourse', language as 'context-dependent' learning and teaching and language as a meaning-making process. Moreover, the whole thesis explores Early Years language with a particular focus on 'speech' and 'discourse'. One aspect in particular of the Early Years teacher's role is to help children become increasingly fluent and independent readers, writers and communicators. Early Years teachers also help their pupils to use spoken and written language effectively in all other learning. These experiences with language are an integral part of children's language curriculum and of their learning about the world.

The perspective adopted in this thesis is that teaching and learning about language is teaching and learning about the world. A curriculum therefore about language is also learning about the world rather than demarcating

language as a separate slot on the timetable labelled 'grammar' or 'knowledge about language'. This chapter also recognises that there are opportunities to learn about language wherever learning takes place through the medium of speech or writing. In this context, I will explore these phenomena in an attempt to contribute to both an emergent philosophy of early years language education from a social perspective and an emergent educational practice that may assist early years educators to re-think their approach to language teaching in the early years. Two key questions in this regard arise: how does children's language emerge? How do children make sense of the world?

More particularly, in the chapter that follows I will examine the social languages of children as 'speech' and 'discourse'; differences between oral and written language; M.A.K. Halliday's notion of text and its relation to social context; Lev Vygotsky's multidisciplinary approach to language learning and teaching, and Jerome Bruner's socio-cognitive approach to early language. From a methodological point of view these philosophies embody elements of phenomenology which, in its broadest meaning, view language as behaviour determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (see Cohen and Manion, 1980). This approach values the importance of subjective critical thinking in the teaching and learning of language. The philosophical viewpoints selected to investigate the research questions in this chapter derive from various strands of phenomenology in the social and cultural field

of inquiry and these will be explored in the sections that follow. The summary at the end of the chapter will define what discourse-making is according to this theoretical investigation, and it is intended that these theoretical elements will support the practical language elements for meaningful learning in the Early Years.

1.2 The social languages of children

This section will focus on 'speech' and 'discourse' as social languages (see Gee, 1996; Bakhtin, 1986). Emphasis on speech and its intellectual properties does not exclude 'written' language or any other form of expression for communicating and interactive purposes. My interest in 'speech' is directly related to early years children, many of whom start school with 'speech' but not with writing or reading skills. The social semiotic theory which underpins language as a communication process insists, as Kress (1997:p12) suggests that,

"signs are motivated relations of form and meaning, of signifiers and signifieds. Children as makers of signs use these forms for the expression of their meaning which best suggest or carry the meaning, and they do so in any medium in which they make signs".

In this context, the terms 'social languages' and 'discourse' imply that as the child's relationship with any interesting material form creates the expression of meaning for the child, linguistic forms such as, 'speech' are also used in a

motivated manner in the representation and communication of meaning (see Kress, 1997).

Bakhtin sees the social character of language as 'discourse' and as 'dialogical phenomenon' (Dentith, 1986). Bakhtin uses these terms to distinguish between language as an 'object' of study for pure linguistics in which grammatical and structural relationships between words are studied in isolation from the social context and from which interactional relationships are excluded, and language as it appears when it takes the form of a dialogue in relations between speaking 'subjects'. Voloshinov (1973) also distinguishes between 'theme' and 'meaning' in that there is the same fundamental differentiation between language (the topic of linguistics) and the particular linguistic utterance which carries and enacts relationships between actual people. Kress (1997:13) states that "children become the agents of their own cultural and social making". Gee (1996:11) argues that "history and culture make the world of activities around us rebuilt in the here and now".

This section and the following one will examine why speech is a social phenomenon and what its properties are. Speech possesses the magical property to fit the situation or context in which we are communicating and at the same time, create that very situation or context that our language, in turn, initially helped to create (see Kress, 1997). When we speak we are

active because we create or build a world of activities and institutions around us (see Gee, 1996). These activities and institutions, like relationships with people, media and experiences with technology are part of the human history and culture, and through speech people rebuild them in the 'here and now' through a process of transformation and the power of language in action in the world (see Gee, 1999 and Kress, 1997). Gee (1999) argues that,

“We continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language, but through language used with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies and ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing. Language - in -action is always and everywhere an active building process.

From a discourse analysis perspective, Gee (1999:12) constructs areas of 'reality' that human beings build historically and culturally through the medium of language. I will use some of his broad categories to describe the different realities that children build in a very constructive speech form through the media of arts (painting, drawing), symbolism and role play, and the use of a variety of tools and objects, while offering my own examples to illustrate this in classroom practice.

1. “The meaning and value of aspects of the material world” (see also the Marxist perspective in Engels, 1977). A child in any environment, a

bedroom, any room in his/her house, classroom, playground, speaks and acts in a certain way for example, 'as if' he/she is a doctor about to examine a patient, and uses different physical positions and language 'registers' to signify areas of the room and adult language.

2. "Activities". The child talks and acts in one way and is engaged in formal discussions with the patient; he/she talks and acts in another way and is engaged in any ordinary conversation to negotiate tools and equipment necessary for the operation.
3. "Identities and relationships". For example, children act and talk in one way at one moment, as a doctor, a nurse, a mum or a dad; the next moment they speak and talk in a different way, speaking and acting as one parent speaking to another.
4. "Connections". For example, a child talks and acts so as to make what he is saying 'here and now' in this storytelling session (about the giant mountain who left the village because the villagers polluted the mountain with rubbish), connected or relevant to what he said the week before about his fears of losing his dad because of continuous arguments between the two parents in the household.

These areas of children's 'reality' may clarify different kinds of 'meaning' that children make to understand the world. They also seem to contradict Saussure's (1983) view of 'meaning' when he described synchronic or static linguistics, i.e. that there is a stable system of entities in the form of

structural relations connected with one another available to a fully competent user of a language for the expression of their 'meaning'. Gee's (1999:31) argument is that "context determines meaning" and makes a distinction between 'informal' social languages, such as ordinary conversations, and 'formal' ones, characteristic of literacy and 'literate talk'. His categories are not only an answer to the inquiry about language as a social phenomenon and its properties but also provide an insight to any claims about failure in the use of "decontextualised language" of minority and lower socio-economic children (see Bourdieu, 1993; Bernstein, 1971). Gee (1999) seems to suggest that children's discourse in fictitious contexts contains the linguistic resources to both organise and maintain their social worlds. Therefore, language development should not be separated from the child's personal and social development in terms of making, development and negotiation of rules, terms and conditions. This viewpoint may also offer a theoretical framework in the use of drama strategies and techniques for the interpretation of children's discourse-making process which is explored in the second chapter of this thesis.

1.3 Differences between oral and written language in meaning-making process

From the middle of the twentieth century, through a broad range of social theories of language, sociolinguists and anthropologists have challenged the literature that attempts to define the differences between spoken and written language (see Goody and Watt, 1968; Olson, 1988), arguing that it

treats literacy and oracy in purely technical terms, rather than as social practices embedded in power structures (see Scribner and Cole, 1981; Barton, 1994). Attempts to define the differences between oral and written language have tended to be consistent in terms of the categories used to differentiate between them. Chafe (1982) contrasts the explicitness and context-free character of written language with the implicit and context-dependent nature of oral language. Biber (1988) and Biber and Finegan (1993) compare written versus spoken as: informational versus involved production, elaborated versus situation-dependent reference, and abstract versus non abstract style. From a functional grammar perspective, Halliday (1985) contrasts the prosodic features and grammatical intricacy of speech with the high lexical density and grammatical metaphor of writing. However, the divide between writing and speech is increasingly less convincing once context and actual social uses of the channels are taken more fully into account (see Besnier, 1988). Vygotsky (1978) regards writing as action following speech, it reflects the external world and emerges with the mastery of talk.

An alternative position which is more relevant to this thesis draws on a different theoretical perspective in which meanings are taken to reside in social practices and discourses rather than in formal properties of language (see Gee, 1990). Applying this perspective to oral and literacy practices shifts the focus away from traditional concern with differences between

channels and onto the ways in which meanings are constructed locally within particular contexts. It also signals that meanings in oral and literate discourse are structuring processes feeding in to wider social formations.

The study of written and oral language is about types of discourses, certain ways of being in the world which draw on and draw in wider issues related to the construction of social knowledge, power relations, and identities. The study of meaning and language is concerned not with individual members of a group but with the identities inscribed in discourses and how they operate (Gee, 1992). In relation to oral communication, many conversations (lecture, talk, storytelling, ritual language and actions) represent communication within a shared here-and-now context, but with reduced or non-existent possibilities for verbal interaction. For example, a telephone call allows for language interaction but lacks the shared here-and-now. When listening to the radio, people have neither the possibility to interact or be influenced by concomitant visual information. However, in written communication, different language products, such as literature, novels and poems, exemplify a kind of communication characterised by interaction but without a shared 'here-and-now'. Children bring their language experiences to the learning of writing. As Kress (1997) states, the learning of writing proceeds in exactly the same fashion as the development of other sign systems. It may be difficult in the classroom context to find good examples of situations where the participants share a common 'here-and-now' and

have possibilities for language interaction. Many teaching situations are of such kind (see Wold, 1992). For example, in classroom situations when adults try to motivate young people to talk through 'open' questions but they use language models which evoke limited responses. Also, when the delivery of the content in learning fails to make meaningful connections with the real world and meet the children's interests. Recently, in a BBC television news report (July, 2000) it was discussed that pupils find difficulty in understanding mathematical language due to the lack of teaching methods in making meaningful connections with the real world.

Kress (1997:3) states that,

"the present literacy curricula - whether in the theories which are implicit and active in them, or whether in the scope of things they include - are not adequate to prepare children for the demands of the new world of communication. Children seem neither overwhelmed by the multitude of the most diverse messages coming to them, nor unable to absorb and transform them into what seem like a coherent, integrated sense. At least, that is what I judge from their play, from their actions, and from their representations which they constantly make".

Children's oral or graphic representations can be subtle and complex in their interpretation by adults who attempt to re-trace the path of their sign making.

Their drawings are representations of a real world and their letter designs are imitations of the adult written system (Kress, 1997). Their designs are planned in many instances in great detail. Often their play and the roles they adopt in their conversations are very carefully planned. They get involved in a whole 'production' process, including 'staging' and narration. Through the medium of drama, which will be discussed in chapter two, the creation of fictitious social contexts may bring into reality institutions and social conventions that can create a need for communication through writing. If adults are prepared to treat these children's forms of internal representation as a serious form of meaning-making, they may realise that in every way children's play and drawing is as complex a task as any form of writing.

When children speak they wish to express a meaning. Adults do the same by uttering a word, or a string of words in order to get the meaning across to the person to whom they are speaking. But when children play a game and they need an object that is not available in the space around them, they make one that suits their needs. As Kress (1997:130) suggested,

"Words are not ready-made objects or tokens of meaning, which we can simply insert into a chess game of our social interactions. Words are materials out of which we can fashion new signs; and these new signs express our meanings. That shift in thinking suggests that the notion of design applies to verbal text also; it could be useful to

explore the consequences of using it in our approach to children's and adult's verbal texts".

In the following section Kress' (1997) point of view about children meeting language as text will be explored through Halliday's social semiotic interpretation on language.

1.4 M.A.K. Halliday: The notion of text and its relation to the social context

Halliday's (1978:21) notion of language as 'text' addresses the issue of what is it that the individual 'can do', 'can mean, and 'can say' through language.

"Language is being regarded as the encoding of a 'behavioural potential' into a 'meaning potential'; that is, as a means of expressing what the human organism 'can do', in interaction with other human organisms, by turning it into what he 'can mean'. What he 'can mean' (the semantic system) is, in turn, encoded into what he 'can say' (the lexicogrammatical system, or grammar and vocabulary)".

One of Halliday's interests was how 'meaning' can be set up in certain generalised contexts of language use. These uses of language on the one hand are active and narrative and on the other hand are associated with ceremonial or religious activities in the culture. For him language is a developmental process, he refers to societal, historical and cultural contexts,

and he does not accept the term 'language acquisition', that is applied more to school situations. He (Halliday, 1978:15) says that "through language the child learns to be and to do, to act and interact in meaningful ways. He learns a system of meaningful behaviour, a semiotic system". Halliday (1978) however, believes that the child's options in his semiotic system are the functional components of this system in the sense that they serve some particular purposes. Function means 'use', the way that people use their language(s), what they expect to achieve by talking and writing, listening and reading for different aims and purposes. In his theory, Halliday has been influenced by the anthropologist Malinowski (1923; 1934), the Austrian psychologist Buhler (1934), Firth (1957; 1968), Jakobson (1953; 1972) and Levi-Strauss (1966) among others. Therefore for Halliday, a functional theory is not a theory about the mental processes involved in the learning of the mother tongue; it is a theory about the social processes involved, about language between people. Moreover, learning to speak is interpreted as the individual's mastery of a behaviour potential. The term 'potential' is very important in Halliday's theory of language but also in education because it signifies the important role of 'instructional teaching' that I will elaborate further through Vygotsky's and Bruner's philosophy of language in a later section. Potential implies not what the child actually 'knows' (the grammar and structure of language) but what he/she 'means', he/she signifies. Halliday views language within a particular situation where the meaning of language is actualised and comes to life. This is 'the context of the situation',

a concrete situation and metaphorically a kind of scenario with props and stage directions, in which language functions. Halliday's (1975) functions of language can be described as follows:

Phase I functions - up to twenty two months: serve the very young child's interpretation of the world (contexts with particular meanings).

1. Instrumental: the function that language serves of satisfying the child's material needs, of enabling him/her to obtain the goods and services that he/she wants. This is the 'I want' function of language; and it is likely to include a general expression of desire, some element meaning simply 'I want that object there (present in the context)', as well as perhaps other expressions relating to specific desires, responses to questions 'Do you want...?' and so on.

2. Regulatory: related to the above but also distinct. It is the function of language as controlling the behaviour of others, something which the child recognises very easily because language is used on him/her in this way by adults: language is used to control his/her own behaviour and he/she soon learns that he/she can turn the tables and use language to control others. The regulatory is the 'do as I tell you' function of language. The difference between this and the instrumental is that in the instrumental the focus is on the goods or services required and it does not matter who provides them, whereas regulatory utterances are directed towards a particular individual, and it is the behaviour of that individual that is to be influenced. Typically therefore, this function includes

meanings such as, a generalised request 'Do that', meaning 'Do what you have just been doing (in the context)', particularly in the form of suggestions like, 'Let's do...'.

3. Interactional: this is what Halliday (1975) classed as the 'me and you' function of language. This is language used by the child to interact with those around him/her, and it includes meanings such as generalised greetings 'Hello, pleased to see you', and also response to calls 'Yes?' as well as more specific forms. For example, the first names of particular individuals that the child learns are typically used with a purely interactional function; and there may be other specific meanings of an interactional kind involving the focusing of attention on particular objects in the environment, some favourite objects which are used as channels for interaction with those around him/her.

4. Personal: this is language used to express the child's own uniqueness; to express his/her awareness of himself/herself, in contradistinction to his/her environment, and then to mould that self. Ultimately, language in the development of personality. This includes therefore, expressions of personal feelings, of participation and withdrawal, of interest, pleasure, disgust and so forth, and extends later to the more specific intrusion of the child as a personality into the speech situation. We might call this 'here I come' function of language.

5. Heuristic: once the boundary between the child and the environment is beginning to be recognised, then the child can turn towards the

exploration of the environment; this is the heuristic function of language, the 'tell me why' function, which later develops into the whole range of questioning forms that the young child uses. At this very early stage, in its most elementary form the heuristic use of language is the demand for a name, which is the child's way of categorising the objects of the physical world; but it soon expands into a variety of more specific meanings.

6. Imaginative: the function of language whereby the child creates an environment of his own. As well as moving into, taking over and exploring the universe which he/she finds around him/her, the child also uses language for creating a universe of his/her own, a world initially of pure sound, but which gradually turns into one of 'story', 'make-believe' and 'let's pretend', and ultimately into the realm of poetry and imaginative writing. This Halliday (1975) calls the 'let's pretend' function of language.

7. Informative: it does not emerge in the life of a child until considerably after the others. This is the 'I've got something to tell you' function. The idea that language can be used as a means of communicating information to someone who does not already possess that information. This function is a very sophisticated one which depends upon the internalisation of a complex set of linguistic concepts that the young child does not possess. It is the only purely intrinsic function of language, the only use of language in a function that is definable solely by reference to language. It is also one that is not present at all in the phase of language development which I am considering here. It begins to appear at around about 22 months.

Halliday (1975) considers the first two years of a child's language development as very important for any formal development. These are the initial functions in relation to how adults identify the content of what the child is learning to say, the meanings that are present in this very early language system. All these utterances which Halliday (1997) identifies as language can be interpreted in the light of some such set of functions. Although this thesis explores children's meaning-making and discourse-making process in Early Years (three to five year olds), Halliday's functions of language create a theoretical understanding for the functions of language in later developments of children's meaning-making which I am exploring as follows. In the act of learning language the child makes a transition from his/her own proto-language which I described in Phase I into the adult linguistic system. This system, according to Halliday (1997) is language as a social and semantic system which goes through evolutionary changes and contains the culture. Therefore, learning language is also learning the culture through language. The transition through the phases could be achieved when children make their own meaning in the process of learning language as can be seen in the Phases that follow.

Phase II (22-24 months) : mathetic and pragmatic use of language

According to Halliday (1997), in order for the child to reach Phase III (the adult language system), he/she has to develop two major zones of meaning

potential, one is the ideational, concerned with the representation of experiences from the external world and of the internal world of his/her own consciousness. This is what Halliday (1975) calls 'the observer function of language', language as a means of talking about the world. It also expresses logical relations which are first perceived and interpreted by the child as relations between things.

The other is interpersonal, concerned with the communication process as a form and as a channel of social action. It is the function of language as a means whereby the speaker participates in the speech situation. Halliday (1997) refers to this as the 'intruder' function of language. The speaker adopts a role, or a set of roles, vis-a-vis the participants in the speech situation, and also assigns roles to the other participants, while accepting (or rejecting) those that are assigned to him; he expresses his own judgements, his own attitudes, his own personality, and in so doing exerts certain effects on the hearers. Such a perspective draws on notions of the speech and literacy event (Hymes, 1974; Heath, 1983), on discourses and practices (Foucault, 1984; Bourdieu, 1991), on the concept of the dialogic in writing and oral practice (Bakhtin, 1981), and on theories of language socialisation (Vygotsky, 1978; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). Halliday (1997) refers to these as the 'expressive-conative' functions of language. The options that the speaker takes up in this area of meaning, while they are strongly interrelated with one another, are in large measure independent of the options which the speaker takes up of an ideational kind. These are clearly marked out in the

grammar of the adult language. Halliday (1975) explains that in order for the child to enter into the adult language, a set of preliminary patterns need to emerge. These consist of the meanings that are associated with the self and should have an element of curiosity; a context of interaction (initiation and response) as an exchange of meanings between the child and another, and lastly, semiotic interaction, meanings associated with objects, where the child initiates the interaction (interactional), is a doer (regulatory) and a giver (instrumental). As a result, the three phases in Halliday's (1975) theory illustrate that it seems likely that meaning arises from the use of language to act. Meaning develops in the ideational function of language where the child's expression of meaning in language involves both reflection on and interaction with the social system. As it is in Phase II that the child makes the fundamental discovery that he/she can both observe and interact with the environment at the same time, Halliday's (1997) interpretation on how children 'learn to mean' supports the assumption that if Drama in Education can provide the social context for the expression of the ideational function of children's language, this process may begin at around about the age of two. The way that Drama may help develop meaning beginning from the ideational period of a child's life will be further explored in chapters two and five.

1.5 Vygotsky's multidisciplinary approach to language, learning and teaching

1.5.1 Introduction

Vygotsky's (1978) four basic schematic components possess the potential to inspire the genesis of a sociocultural methodology in the teaching of language learning in Early Years in this thesis.

1. His (Vygotsky, 1978) approach to mental functions and knowledge addresses issues of sociocultural significance that I find particularly important in contemporary multicultural educational systems where 'teachers teach and children learn', which means that knowledge is transmitted.
2. His focus on the development of the individual, in particular during childhood.
3. His claim that higher mental functioning in the individual (such as thinking, voluntary attention, and logical memory) derive from social life.
4. His concept of language as both a social and an individual human action mediated through tools and signs motivate this thesis towards a further exploration of the issue of 'mediation' as a methodological tool in the development of meaning-making and problem-solving in Early Years.

Lastly, Vygotsky's (1978) insights about the relationship between social and individual processes, especially the nature of learning and the relationship of language to thought, still inform contemporary views about how human beings develop language in social contexts of learning.

I will firstly examine Vygotsky's notion of speech in relation to children's cognitive, psychological and cultural development. A brief reference to intellectual foundations that formulated his thinking is unavoidable at this point and will hopefully highlight the notion of language and speech as a developmental and cultural process further. I will then concentrate on Vygotsky's different speech functions to elaborate the notion of education in the development of language in early childhood. Finally I will focus on his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development which will be examined in relation to early childhood psychology and education in order to see if elements of this approach can be incorporated in the teaching of language in Early Years.

1.5.2 Influences of Vygotsky's theoretical approach and the notion of speech as a cultural process

Vygotsky (Wertch, 1985) sees language as a form of 'mediation' between social interaction and mental processes. He believes that language is the motivating factor and that social interactions and mental processes can be understood only if we understand the 'tools' and 'signs' that mediate them. This concept of 'semiotic mediation' provided one of the key ideas that became the basis of his developmental theory and formulated his notion of human mental functioning.

Thus as Wertsch (1985:15) cites,

"Vygotsky defined development in terms of the emergence of transformation of forms of mediation, and his notion of

social interaction and its relation to higher mental processes necessarily involves mediational mechanisms”.

Vygotsky's theory and practice has an interdisciplinary flavour and combines ideas from a range of what are now considered quite separate disciplines.

As Newman and Holzman (1993:2) have stated:

“Vygotsky's brilliance as a thinker stemmed from his revolutionary activity-using/ reorganising whatever there was available: Russian semiotics, linguistics and culture; German philosophy; European and American pedagogy and psychology; Marx and Engels; the intellectual, political, economic and cultural forces and contradictions of the new socialist state.”

His thinking on the particular concepts that I will focus on for the purpose of this thesis reflect his creativity in using diverse disciplines in productive dialogue and in interaction. These concepts seem to derive from the following ideas:

(a) Dialectical and historical materialism and the relation between speech-tool use and speech-sign use

In order to understand Vygotsky's philosophy and its application to education I will firstly need to define the concepts 'dialectics', 'historical thinking' and 'materialism'. In Marxist-Leninist theory (Boguslavsky et al.,1975) Hegel's dialectics is one of the greatest achievements before the emergence of

Marxism. Boguslavsky et al. (1975:59) describe the concept 'dialectical thinking' as the perpetual motion of things and state that,

“ Two thousand five hundred years ago, when science (e.g., physics, geography, botany, and so on) were not yet in existence, the only form of knowledge came from philosophy which embraced everything. Philosophers, who concerned themselves with the earth and the sky, things and creatures, society and mind, could not fail to observe that all things are in a state of perpetual motion, that they appear and disappear, are connected in one way or another and marked by any contradictions”.

In his definition of dialectics Engels (1976:30) stated that, “this is a primitive, naïve but intrinsically correct conception of the world”. All social sciences study one object, the life of society, but they each regard society from a particular angle, such as the angle of economics, population, history, culture, and so on. Boguslavsky et al. (1975: 297) define historical thinking as follows:

“Historical materialism is a philosophical science concerned with the specific laws of social development as distinct from the universal laws of being. The laws of historical materialism do not operate in nature but only in society and consider the general aspects, tendencies and laws of social development.

And as society is inseparable from men, social laws can manifest themselves only through human activity”.

Boguslavsky et al. (1975:18) describe materialism in relation to the philosophical stances of objectivity and subjectivity as follows:

“All bodies and mechanical, physical, chemical and physiological processes they undergo are usually described as material phenomena, or matter. They can be investigated through our senses and mind (objectivity) and they are products, objects of nature (materialist belief). Pride, shame, joy, and all other feelings supplied by our five senses, as well as thoughts teeming in the mind are usually described as ideal, or spiritual phenomena or consciousness, they are independent of the material world (subjectivity/idealism)”.

The writings of Marx and Engels played a central role in the development of Vygotsky's ideas, and throughout his life he reorganised whatever intellectual material was available to apply it into psychology and pedagogy. One of the most important ideas that Vygotsky (1978) transformed into pedagogical practice was the notion of ‘activity’ and ‘action’, taken from the concept of ‘matter’ and ‘motion’ in the dialectical materialist approach. It was also described by Engels (in Boguslavsky, 1975) in earlier stages with the notion of dialectical materialism, but the scientific discoveries of the 20th

century also proved that nature (atoms), the material world, is immutable, infinite in extent and sees everything as mechanical motion.

Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to mind describes and explains human action. He (Vygotsky in Newman and Holzman, 1993) views human beings as coming into contact with, and creating, their surroundings as well as themselves through the actions in which they engage. Cole et al (1978:24), editors of Vygotsky's writings, stated that:

“the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge”.

This view has been further developed by the philosopher Jurgen Habermas (1984:86), with the concept of 'communicative action'. He refers to it as,

“the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extraverbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to co-ordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of *interpretation* refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit consensus”.

The above model of action points to fundamental issues of teaching and learning in education (such as interactive learning, the role of the teacher in the learning process, passive and active learning, child-centred education), and might support the use of 'Drama' as a learning process and as a teaching tool, which will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

(b) The functions of speech

Vygotsky (1978:52) uses the term "signal activity" to describe the acts of signs as instruments, as mediated tools of psychological activity analogous to the role of a tool in labour. The idea of 'signal activity' links the field of 'social semiotics' with the notion of the different functions of speech. This link is particularly important in education and in multicultural societies because it emphasises the variety of speech diversities, discharges written language from its academic responsibility and emphasises the different forms of communication for the production of meaning.

Similar to Saussure's (1974) notion of 'the science of the life of signs', Vygotsky's notion of speech functions influenced later developments in the field of Semiotics and the reasoning about semiotic mediation of human mental processes. Similar to Halliday's functions of language, Vygotsky considered form-function relationships in his semiotic analysis about language development (see Wertsch, 1991). However, an important difference between the two theorists is that Halliday as a sociolinguist is concerned with the functional approach to language as a "transition" phase

of development in society and considers language as functional as well as structural: how it is used, "the encoding of a behaviour potential into a meaningful potential" (see Halliday, 1978:21; Hasan and Martin, 1989). Vygotsky, as a psychologist, focuses primarily on the difference in the structure and the function of the speech forms rather than how these function and develop in social communication. Another difference between the two theorists is that Halliday (Hasan and Martin, 1989:26) is interested in ways in which "language is organised to respond to context and the interpretation of context by the speakers". On the other hand Vygotsky (Moll, 1990:47) also considered language as a social function but because of that "it goes through an external stage in its development. The internalisation process is not simply the transferral of an external activity to a pre-existing internal stage of consciousness but the process through which interpersonal processes transform into intrapersonal ones".

In terms of teaching and learning, Vygotsky (Moll, 1990) states that internalisation transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions, consequently, teachers learn and learners teach. For Halliday (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) text is a unity of meaning in context and language is mediated in the child-parent relationship or activity through culture whilst Vygotsky (1978) recognises text as a complex cultural activity and considers word meaning as the basic unit for the analysis of consciousness and the development of verbal thinking because word

meaning is both a psychological and a social phenomenon. Vygotsky (Moll, 1990:193) states that,

“through the use of language in activity settings, the dialectic between the intramental and the intermental planes produces constant, evolutionary development in word meaning”.

The route for speech to develop from the intramental to the intermental plane that is to higher-order verbal thinking is through formal instruction. Vygotsky's (in Wertsch, 1991) account of inner speech was influenced by the account of egocentric speech outlined by Piaget (1923). According to Vygotsky, the appearance of egocentric speech marked the emerging differentiation of speech functions. He (Vygotsky, 1934a:45) stated that,

“in the process of growth the child's social speech, which is multifunctional, develops in accordance with the principle of differentiation of separate functions, and at a certain age is quite sharply differentiated into egocentric and communicative speech”.

An understanding of Vygotsky's speech functions may contribute to this thesis by offering some methodological tools to develop language in Early Years (see chapter five). According to Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985:88-89) the speech as activity may take the following forms:

1. “signaling function” versus “significative function”. Cole et al. (1978:52) state that this feature distinguishes the higher forms of behaviour from the

lower. "The sign acts as an instrument of psychological activity in a manner analogous to the role of a tool in labor". (see Marxist theory in Boguslavsky et al., 1975). The basic analogy between sign and tool rests on the mediating function that characterises them (see Cole et al, 1978). Here Vygotsky sees language as a psychological function and influenced by Pavlov he interprets it not as a social but as a mental activity. When objects refer to words they have a 'signaling function' because they stimulate a response (this is an extension of Pavlov's (1929) second type of conditioned reflexes). Through mediated (indirect) activity (instruction), signs which are oriented towards internal stimulation can function as 'signifiers'; internalisation of socially rooted and historically developed activities which are higher order skills.

2. "Individual function" versus "social" and "communicative" function":

Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978:57) states that,

"Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts".

These functions of language illustrate that the process of internalisation consists of a series of transformations.

3. "Indicative" versus "symbolic functions": In Vygotsky's theory (Wertch, 1991) the relationship between the two functions reflects different ways for the organisation of signs as vehicles for the development of speech. In one way the context-bound aspect of linguistic organisation (linguistic signs) depended on the context in which they appear ('indicative function'). The 'symbolic function' on the other hand, indicates that certain aspects of language organisation can operate independently of the context in which sign vehicles occur.

In my attempt to inform this study with methodological sociocultural tools that will facilitate the learning of language in Early Years I will make the connection between the dialectical historical materialist approach based on the revolutionary (practical - critical) activity and the Vygotskian 'tool-and-result' methodology to elaborate the 'speech-tool use' and the 'speech-action' relationship.

Holzman and Newman (1979:23) state that,

"this activity is not to be equated with the activity of 'making a revolution'.... The individual is capable of historical transformation only if he is involved in it".

By using the term "revolutionary activity" Holzman and Newman (1979) describe the act of self-conscious transformation of the world in a practical and critical way.

This notion links with various learning purposes that derive from 'Drama in Education' as a methodological tool and as a context for learning, such as problem-solving, change of understanding on a personal level leading to change on a societal level, and the fictional and empowering roles of learners in drama such as, the researcher. The link between drama, language learning and thinking will be explored in the second chapter.

(c) Speech-tool use relationship

For Vygotsky (Holzman and Newman, 1979) the distinct quality of the human species is the ability to practise 'revolutionary activities' that is, to transform the social world. It is the dialectic-in-practice approach that human activity is described by constant change and motion and it can therefore change and transform the historical reality, not as a totality, but in particular historical moments or situations. Vygotsky (Holzman and Newman, 1979) uses a metaphor to describe the way that this change takes place in a sociocultural setting: the toolmakers in tool-and-result labour (human activity). As the Neanderthal man in the middle palaeolithic period learnt how to make flint spear tips, daggers, knives, scrapers and bone implements to survive and adapt to nature by completely refashioning things, in order to make nature serve his own needs, the child behaves in a similar way. Through structured play, that is a transformational activity, and through language, the child transforms real objects from the world into tools, and

uses language (concepts, ideas, and signals representing a combination of sounds - the material world) as a meaningful, practical and revolutionary human activity. This indicates how learning takes place and Vygotsky's view is explained by Bruner (1974:421) as follows:

"In the act of learning [one aspect] may be called transformation - the process of manipulating knowledge to make it fit new tasks. We learn to unmask or analyse information, to order it in a way that permits extrapolation or interpolation or conversion into another form. Transformation comprises the ways we deal with information in order to go beyond it".

(d) Speech-tool use, speech-sign use and the development of higher mental processes

Vygotsky's (Wertsch, 1985) interpretation of the 'meaning of the word' was inspired by Darwin's theory on the 'Origins of the species', Piaget's (1969; 1977) account on the chronological stages of cognitive development and the notion of 'egocentric speech', and Pavlov's (1930) account of a stimulus-response framework for the development of mental operations from elementary (senses create the stimulus) to higher mental functions (verbalisation and response to stimulus). As Vygotsky states in Wertsch (1985:24),

“to separate psychological phenomena that can be found in both humans and animals from those that are unique to humans [it is better to describe] mental functions as ‘cultural’ instead of ‘higher’”.

Vygotsky’s examination of how mental functions, such as memory, attention, perception and thinking first appear in an elementary form and later change into a higher form, directed him to the distinction between memory as a higher mental process and ‘natural memory’, that is the kind of memory very close to perception because it arises out of direct influence of external stimuli upon human beings, such as in the case of nonliterate people (see Vygotsky, 1978). The stimulation in this case is directly determined from the environment. The extended operation of memory beyond the biological dimensions of the human nervous system is a ‘self-generated’ and ‘stimuli based’ one. These stimuli are called ‘signs’, they merge uniquely to human beings and are an entirely new form of behaviour (Vygotsky,1978). In this case the individual must be actively engaged in establishing a link between the stimulus and the response (see Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, signs are second order stimuli because the individual does not just use them directly as they come from the environment but instead acts on them using knowledge, imagination, and previous experience. In the first instance, there is a linear relationship, an automatic, mechanistic reaction to the stimulus (external environment, nature, world) that produces a response.



Figure 1: linear operation

This linear operation is what Pavlov (1930) and Piaget (1969) have described. Vygotsky (Newman and Holzman, 1993) extended it further.

In the second case, the individual uses mental operations and links the stimulus with the experience (mediated activity) to create a response.

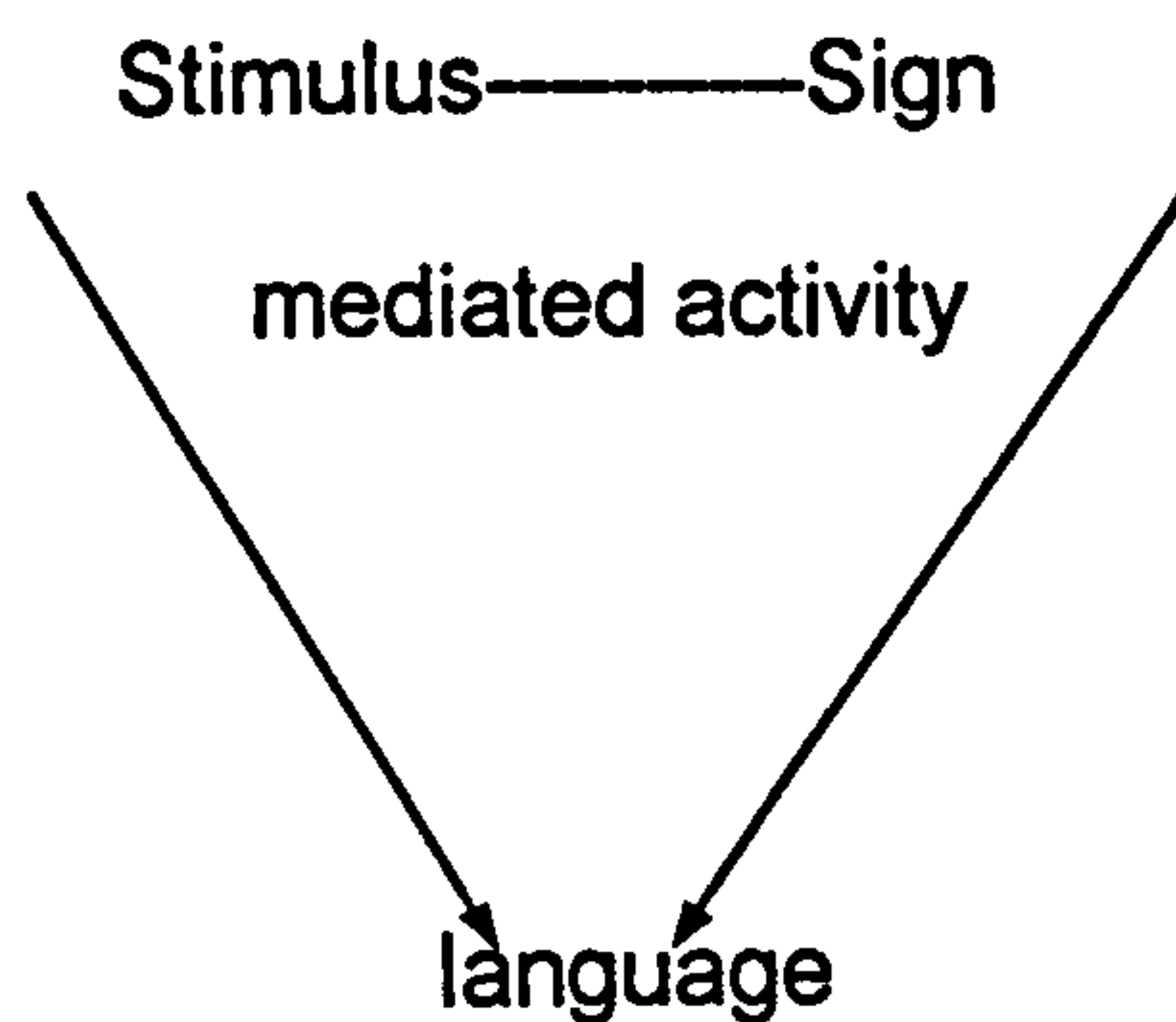


Figure 2: Non-linear operation

This kind of indirect or mediated operation is what Vygotsky (1978) called 'revolutionary activity' - the individual acts on his/her environment to create meaning, new forms of understanding, new concepts, to create new language and when it takes place it is an activity that he called higher mental process. In Newman and Holzman (1993:49) Vygotsky's revolutionary activity of 'thought equals language equals meaning' is described in the following way:

“The unique quality of human labour is to be found in the meaningfulness of human activity. Meaning is to be located precisely in the human capacity to alter the historical totality even if we are determined (in our societal particularity) by it. The activity of making meaning is a fundamental expression of revolutionary activity”.

Drama in Education, which is explored in the second chapter, has the potential to use children’s play, imagination, creativity and experiences, to create imaginative social contexts through careful use of language by the adult/teacher, and facilitate children’s learning by developing a new understanding and new forms of knowledge. The appropriateness of this methodology in relation to the findings from the social theories of language about language in Early Years will be examined in the following chapter.

I will now look at how Vygotsky approached the notion of language as meaning making and speech in the Early Years and how the theory applies to practice through observations and experiments led by himself and his colleagues Leontiev and Luria in Central Asia and Europe. From these I discuss the notion of ‘egocentric speech’ which has historically influenced Early Years education, the process of ‘meaning-making’ in children’s speech and how learning can develop from play.

1.5.3 On the notion of 'egocentric speech'

Contemporary Early Years educational systems such as the British and the American have been influenced by Piaget's (1932; 1952; 1954; 1970; 1977) concept of 'developmental stages' in children's learning and the concepts of formation and socialisation. However, perhaps due to misinterpretation of Piaget's theory, children below the age of five are still regarded as having certain deficits, not being able to operate at a cognitive level unless they are chronologically mature and reach a certain stage in their cognitive development. Vygotsky, from the socio-cultural perspective, has been influenced by Piaget's concept of 'egocentric speech' and developed it further. The development of the concept by Vygotsky may offer a different explanation on what children are able to do through language and instruction.

Piaget (1926:72) viewed children's speech in the following way:

"This speech is egocentric above all because the child speaks only about herself, and mainly because she does not attempt to place herself at the point of view of the listener. The child is not interested in whether others listen, she does not expect an answer, and she does not wish to influence her neighbours or in fact communicate anything to them. This is a monologue.... the essence of which can be expressed in a single formula: The child talks to herself as though she was thinking aloud. She does not address

anyone...When she is doing lessons the child accompanies her action with various utterances”.

Whilst Piaget (1952) argued that the child's acquisition of speech, the need for communication and the development of thinking skills occur at a later stage (after the age of seven), Vygotsky (1978) proved that the child's acquisition of speech not only takes place in a social context but is itself history - a social historical human activity. Piaget (1952) defined egocentric thought as intermediate between autistic and rational thought.

In experiments that Vygotsky (Wertsch, 1985) conducted of how egocentric speech is produced he found that by increasing the experimental factors in activity tasks given to the children (e.g. drawing with pencil, without paper, etc.), the child would talk to him/herself twice as often to guide or to plan the action for the activity (see Vygotsky, 1987). According to Vygotsky this problem-solving oriented speech of the child is 'inner speech' which Bakhtin labelled as “primordial dialogism of discourse” (see Bakhtin, 1981:275) and it means that the child's speech has taken on the properties of hidden dialogue between 'himself' and 'another'. It is a 'thinking and speaking' language that has the form of self guided action in the discovery and exploration of the world. This idea of 'dialogue' between the child and 'another', is further analysed in the dramatic methodology described in the second chapter when the notions of 'role taking', 'acting in role' and 'self - spectator' are referred to.

In Wertsch (1991:13) both Vygotsky and Bakhtin believe that,

“human communicative practices give rise to mental functioning in the individual”.

Herbert Mead (1934:191) who also formulated his ideas about the same time, was convinced that,

“Intelligence or mind could arise or could have arisen, other than through the internalisation by the individual’s social processes of experience and behaviour, that is, through this internalisation of the conversation of significant gestures... By the individual taking on the attitudes of other individuals towards himself and towards what is being thought about. And if mind or thought has arisen in this way, then there neither can be nor could have been any mind or thought without language; and the early stages of the development of language must have been prior to the development of mind or thought”.

For Mead (1934: xvi),

“language is an objective phenomenon of interaction within a social group, a complication of the gesture situation, and even when internalised to constitute the inner forum of the individual’s mind, it remains social - a way of arousing in the individual by his own gestures the attitudes and roles of others implicated in a common social activity”.

Unlike many scholars of language, especially contemporary linguists who concern themselves primarily with linguistic forms and meaning abstracted from the actual conditions of use (see Coulmas, 1997), Bakhtin (Dentith, 1995) focused his analytic efforts on the 'utterance' as 'the real unit of speech communication'. The way that Bakhtin develops this idea is similar to Vygotsky's concept of mediated action. It may therefore link with the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development as a self-instructive device and as a mediated form of instruction (provided by an adult or peers) which will be explored in following sections. Bakhtin (1986:71) stated that,

“... speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects. Speech is always cast in the form of an utterance belonging to a particular speaking subject, and outside this form cannot exist”.

In consideration of the above, the following questions arise: what form do these concrete utterances take or should take in our educational system today? Who does the talking: the teacher or the pupil, or both? Whose voice is heard in the classroom? Who is the addresser and the addressee? These questions will be addressed in following chapters.

Bakhtin's (Dentith, 1995) notion of the concepts of 'utterance' and 'voice' is significant in this thesis, because it contradicts linguistic and semiotic analysis

on 'meaning-making'; 'words and sentences' can be defined as correct in discourse in terms of grammar and structure (see Chomsky's, 1965 'Generative Grammar'). Following the lead of Saussure (1983) who suggested 'parole as speech', that "speech is always individual and that the individual is always master of it", Bakhtin (1986) viewed voices and utterances in a dialogic relationship, in discourse: "who is doing the speaking - the fact that "the utterance has... an author - and who is being addressed" (Bakhtin, 1986: 304-5). So utterance is inherently associated with at least two voices. The idea is connected to Vygotsky's approach of mediated action, which contradicts Piaget's notion of 'egocentric speech' and provides a theoretical basis for the argument that children's development of inner speech is connected to the notion of 'the stages of the self - spectator' that Dorothy Heathcote applied to texts through dramatic methodology. I shall now expand on some of these implications as they relate to the issue of meaning-making.

1.5.4 On children's speech and meaning-making

So far I have explored the notion of 'meaning making' as developed by Vygotsky. Meaning making according to Newman and Holzman (1993:50) is,

"the child's language learning activity, it is the activity of playing 'language games', it is a 'revolutionary activity' and has dialectical character".

In this section I will explore the relationship between speech and meaning-making further because this is significant for the development of early language skills. For the purpose of this thesis, which aims to develop a methodology for language teaching and learning in Early Years education through drama, I will select from three categories of Vygotsky's (Cole et al., 1978) socio-cultural theory which explore the concept in more depth, in order to:

1. identify important theoretical, educational principles of a socio-cultural methodology for language teaching and learning in Early Years;
2. create a theoretical background that will assist teachers in relation to ethical and pedagogical issues, to teach the Foundation Stage curriculum (see chapter four), and what they should 'really' teach according to the social theories of language;
3. to understand Vygotsky's methodological approach to teaching through the concept of the 'Zone of Proximal Development'.

According to Vygotsky when the young child learns language he/she develops mental skills about the world, thus higher order functions are developed (see Cole et al., 1978). This process of learning language happens in the following way and pursues the following characteristics:

- (a). From the point of view of psychological development, memory rather than abstract thought is the definitive characteristic of the early stages of cognitive development (see Cole et al., 1978).

Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978:53) stated that, “for the young child to think means to recall; but for the adolescent, to recall means to think”. Memory in early childhood is one of the central psychological functions upon which all the other functions are built and thinking is determined by memory (see Cole et al., 1978).

Concepts (words) are determined not so much by the logical structure of the concept itself as by the child’s concrete recollections (impressions, images) (Cole et al., 1978). The concept formation has a relative character and reflects the fact that the child’s thinking depends first of all on his memory (Cole et al., 1978). Children’s thinking develops visual concepts when they are required to transpose a relation learned with one set of stimuli to a similar set. Their transfer is nothing more than remembering with respect to isolated instances. Their general representations of the world are based on the recall of concrete instances and do not yet possess the character of an abstraction (see Cole et al., 1978). Consequently, they develop word meaning (concepts) as related to a series of examples and construct them in a manner similar to the way we represent family names. To name words for them is not so much to indicate familiar concepts as to name familiar families or whole groups of visual things connected by visual ties (see Cole et al., 1978). The very essence of human memory exists in the fact that human beings actively remember with the help of signs (see Cole et al., 1978). The basic characteristic of human behaviour is that humans personally influence their relations with the environment and through that environment personally

change their behaviour, subjugating it to their control (learning that takes place in intra- and inter- psychological level; dialogical relationship of learning between self and the environment) (see Cole et al., 1978).

(b). Learning is necessary and a universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organised, specifically human psychological functions such as:

External knowledge and abilities in children become internalised (see Wertch, 1991; Cole et al., 1978). Internal relations of the intellectual processes are awakened by school learning (see Wertch, 1991; Cole et al., 1978). Development in children never follows school learning and each school subject has its own relation to the course of child development (see Wertch, 1991; Cole et al., 1978). Consequently, the methodology of the 'zone of proximal development' may provide a solution to the issue of the highly complex dynamic relations between developmental and learning processes.

(c). Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978:100) states that,

"Play gives a child a new form of desires. It teaches her to desire by relating her desires to a fictitious 'I', to her role in the game and its rules. In this way a child's greatest achievements are possible in play, achievements that

tomorrow will become her basic level of real action and morality.”

Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978) also states that, in play, ‘action’ is subordinated to meaning; in real life action dominates meaning. Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation, the creation of voluntary intentions, and the formation of real - life plans and volitional motives - all appear in play and make it the highest level of pre-school development. How therefore, does the child move forward through play?

A child starts with an imaginary situation that is very close to the real one for example, a child playing with a doll repeats almost exactly what her mother does with her. The child at play is free to determine her own actions. In a sense, this is an illusory freedom, for her actions are in fact subordinated to the meanings of things, and she acts accordingly (see also Gee’s, 1999 stages of discourse). As Moll (1990) described, this play is an imaginary situation, but it is only comprehensible in the light of a real situation that has just occurred. It is more nearly a recollection of something that has actually happened than imagination. It is more memory in action than a novel imaginary situation. It is more pretend play, imitation of the real world (see also Kress, 1997).

Play as an activity should have a purpose. As play develops, we see a movement toward the conscious realisation of its purpose. The purpose decides the game and justifies the activity. Purpose, as the ultimate goal,

determines the child's affective attitude to play and develops his/her abilities to create imaginatively. As Weininger (1982:57) states,

"Imagination is different from pretend, although the two are intimately connected in the ongoing interactive process of thoughts and actions in a child's intellectual development. Imagination is to the young child what problem solving is to the adult. Pretend is another activity altogether; it is play, the kind of play that usually has a theme that often involves other people, either children, dolls, or 'pretend people'".

At the end of development, rules emerge, and the more rigid they are the greater the demands on the child's application, the greater the regulation of the child's activity, the more tense and acute play becomes (see Hodge and Kress, 1988). Therefore play appears to be a functional and a 'revolutionary' activity.

From the point of view of development, creating an imaginary situation can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought through a dialogic relationship between self and other (see Dentith, 1995). The corresponding development of rules leads to actions on the basis of which the division between work and play becomes possible, a division encountered at school age as a fundamental fact. Serious play for a young child means that the child plays without separating the imaginary situation from the real one (Kree, 1995).

I will now explore how Vygotsky applies the theory into practice through the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development.

1.5.5 Play, the use of tool as pivot and the 'Zone of Proximal Development' in language teaching / learning

Some developmental psychologists and educators such as Piaget (1962) see play as an assimilation of reality to self. Winnicott (1970) views play as a means of developing self and reality in the social world. For Erikson (1977), play is a critical means of 'working through' emotional conflicts. Sutton-Smith (1976) emphasises that children's play provides evidence that they can take the role of the other. These psychologists have explored and associated play with other concepts and activities such as games, imagination, fantasy, symbolic representation, pretending, performing, pleasure and fun. But there are also other conceptual frameworks in which play 'lives'. In early childhood the child develops through 'pretend play', 'free play' and fantasy activities. In later school years they develop more structured, regulated forms of play through which children imitate the adult world in a more conceptualised form. Play has also been used as a form of therapy with children, psychoanalysis of children, (Klein in Newson, 1992), as playtherapy (Cattenach, 1990) and with adults in dramatherapy, (Jennings, 1980). In theatre, games and play are used in many different forms for actors' preparation and as part of a devised play (Stanislavski in Magarshack, 1960, 1948; Brecht in Willett, 1964, 1978; Boal, 1992). In education, 'dramatic play' is being used as a form of learning, to challenge stereotypes, for questioning on personal and

social issues, and for meaning-making through activated learning (Heathcote, 1984). This last form of play will be explored in the second chapter.

These and other contemporary researchers of play as well as specialists in the field of early childhood education believe that play is important for the holistic development of children at a cognitive, psychological and social level. According to Garvey (1991), Hughes (1996; 1998) and Jennings (1999), to mention a few, some general characteristics of play are:

- (1) children develop identity through play,
- (2) children explore personal and social boundaries through structured forms of play,
- (3) children learn about themselves, about others, work in group situations, co-operate and learn social norms,
- (4) children develop cognitive and motor skills in play and problem - solving activities through discovery learning.

The notion of play as understood by Vygotsky, is one of the major tools in his analysis for the development of speech in children and for his methodology based on the notion of 'revolutionary, practical activity' in the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky's (Wertsch, 1978) general claim about the social origins of higher mental functioning in the individual, linked with the action oriented teaching and learning in the child's 'zone of proximal

development, assesses the child's intelligence and organises forms of instruction (see Sternberg and Detterman, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978:101) states that,

“play is not the predominant feature of childhood but it is a leading factor in development.”

According to Vygotsky (1978) early play is an imaginary situation and a reproduction of reality. The child acts out parental (adult) roles re-creating what she/he has seen or experienced. ‘The stick’ becomes a ‘pivot’ for the transference of meaning (see Vygotsky, 1978). It is through play activities that words become part of the object. Vygotsky (1978:99) states that,

“In play a child spontaneously makes use of his ability to separate meaning from an object without knowing he is doing it, just as he does not know he is speaking in prose but talks without paying attention to the words. Thus, through play the child achieves a functional definition of concepts or objects, and words become parts of a thing”.

Vygotsky views learning as a profoundly social process and disagrees with the mere exposure of children to oral lectures, in the way that they are often experienced in school, and he emphasises dialogue and the varied roles that language plays in instruction and in mediated cognitive growth.

In Wolman (1968:338) Leontiev and Luria summarise some of the specific features of classroom education:

“school education is qualitatively different from education in the broad sense. At school the child is faced with a particular task: to grasp the bases of scientific studies....The early concepts (Vygotsky called them ‘everyday’ or ‘spontaneous’ concepts) that have been built in the child in the process of living and which were assisted by rapport with his social environment are now switched to a new process, to a new specially cognitive relationship to the world, and so in this process the child’s concepts are transformed and their structure changes. In the development of a child’s consciousness the grasping of the bases of a science system of concepts now takes the lead”.

This is a ‘learning through interaction’ type of education and has been described by Luria and Leontiev in 1960s.

Vygotsky (Wolman, 1968) proposes a parallel between play and school instruction through the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development. They are both social contexts in which children elaborate socially available skills and knowledge that they will internalise at their own pace. This process of internalisation, that is consciousness and knowledge, takes place on two levels. Firstly between people (child - mother/father) - interpsychologically, then inside the child - intrapsychologically, and finally in school through the

methodology of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZOPD). The potential of 'educational drama' to operate as ZOPD for the development of knowledge, will be examined in the following chapter using Dorothy Heathcote's 'levels of self-spectator function' for the development of 'inner' or 'internalised' language.

According to Vygotsky (1978:56-7), this internalisation for the development of higher mental processes (practical intelligence, voluntary attention, memory) consists of the following series of transformations:

- a. "An operation that initially represents an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally": the transformation of sign using activity.
- b. "An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal process": voluntary attention, logical memory, formation of concepts.
- c. "The transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events".

The ZOPD identifies independent problem solving mental functions that have matured as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles at a child's actual developmental level. Then it defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, the 'buds' of development, functions that are in the prospect of maturation. As Vygotsky (1978:86) describes the method, it is,

"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level

of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”.

Vygotsky's sociocultural philosophy addresses many educational issues in a multidisciplinary way but the role of structured play in the holistic development of language through the application of ZOPD methodology may not fully express the child's needs in the forms described by Wertsch (1985, 1991), Newman and Holzman (1993), or Vygotsky as edited by Cole et al. (1978). Their theoretical analyses about the significance of play for the child's social, psychological and cognitive development initiates the link between 'object' as 'tool' and 'tool' as 'sign' in its transformation from the 'tool' to 'pivot' and it consequently places 'play' at the centre of an educational methodology -the 'Zone of Proximal Development'.

But I believe that the method (ZOPD) does not sufficiently explore the significant potential that play (child's imagination, physicality, roles, gestures, objects as artefacts) has in young children's learning and does not take fully into account how cultural and linguistic varieties ('interpersonal' skills) can be incorporated into the ZOPD and potentially develop 'intrapersonal' language and skills. However, the method has the potential to assist in the development of a methodology for the teaching of language in Early Years.

Gallimore and Tharp (1988) have applied and extended the ZOPD in practice with the intention of improving public schools that have fallen short of reformist hopes owing to the absence of a basis for understanding and correcting teaching and schooling in the US. In chapter five, I will use elements of the ZOPD to develop a model to teach and learn language in the Early Years Curriculum which uses play as a pivot to learning in a physical, imaginative, creative, aesthetic and participatory form and introduces structured play as a teaching device in Early Years.

1.6 Bruner's socio-cognitive approach to early language

1.6.1 Introduction

In this study I use aspects of Jerome Bruner's research with the aim of creating a social theory of language for the Early Years and to develop in later chapters, a potential teaching methodology that can meet the child's social, psychological and cognitive needs.

Bruner's (1986:10) approach to children's learning has a sociohistorical perspective because some of the original influences on his theory have been drawn from Darwin's 'The Origins of the Species' and Vygotsky's tool-as-result method and the ZOPD:

"Language, the way of life, the religion and science of people reflect deeply the culture into which they are born and of which man sorts out and responds to the world

around him; His personal history comes to reflect the traditions and thought - ways of his culture...”

Most importantly of all, Bruner (1972:161) extended Vygotsky’s notion of tool-as-result to contemporary technological societies and the way of man’s thinking, stating that,

“man over a long period of years...has changed by linking himself with new, external implementation systems rather than by any conspicuous change in morphology... the implement systems ranging from cutting tool through the lever and wheel to the wide variety of modern devices...which involve symbol systems governed by rules that must, for effective use, be shared...We move, perceive and think in a fashion that depends upon techniques rather than upon wired-in arrangements in our nervous system”.

Bruner’s emphasis on speech, both verbal and non-verbal, and his view that words communicate particular personal and social meanings in interaction with ‘another’, supports the theory of language in a context of ‘immediate use’ in relation to the teaching and learning of language in Early Years. Moreover, his approach to teaching as an instructing and an aiding device, a ‘scaffolding’ process, similar in its origins to the Vygotskian ZOPD, opens up some methodological areas in teaching and learning through ‘Drama’ that I

will explore later on in this study. It also links with the contemporary demands for teaching interventions in learning as suggested in the 'Early Learning Goals' (1999) and the recent government document, 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' (2000), which will be examined in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

Furthermore, Bruner explores how 'play' can be used as a method to facilitate 'scaffolding' beyond Vygotsky's practices, and links it to children's development and language acquisition. Bruner's metaphoric notion of 'spiral curriculum' in early language learning provides the contemporary curriculum with pedagogical principles and concrete ideas for reconsideration of methodological practices.

In this section I will therefore explore a methodological perspective for the teaching and learning of language in the Early Years that is based on Bruner's research. Questions raised will include: how children acquire language, how 'play' can contribute to children's language and personality development, can a 'spiral' curriculum incorporate 'scaffolding' in Early Years children's 'Zone of Proximal Development'? The answers to these questions will hopefully explore how 'scaffolding' as a teaching methodology can facilitate children's 'Zone of Proximal Development'.

1.6.2 Cognitive growth in a social context and the development of skill in infancy

Bruner (1974) considers the continuity between infancy to adult cognition as building higher mental processes such as concept attainment, problem solving and use of symbols.

Other scholars like Bernstein (1967) and Lashley (1951) offered a similar contribution before him. In his writings, Bruner (1974:242) has specifically stressed that,

“skilled behaviour has much in common with language production on the one hand and problem solving on the other...like language, skilled behaviour is productive or generative in that acquired constituent acts can be combined in new ways to achieve different goals, just as familiar words can be combined in new ways to produce novel sentences”.

Bruner (1974) views ‘skilled behaviour’ as a problem solving situation because both skills and problems are mastered when an objective has been attained and they both usually require a series of constituent operations. A person’s difficulty in solving a problem or developing a skill is not often the execution of a single constituent but rather a combination; this is growth, the increasing ability to orchestrate the modules of skill into a programme of action in order to achieve a goal. Bruner (1974) therefore describes this process as ‘acts of construction’ in the development of mind in infants (up to 3 years of age), in his attempt to understand how human skill eventuates in human tool use (see Vygotsky, 1978).

Bruner’s (1975) concern with the hands of man, quite similar to Vygotsky but differently expressed, stems from a conviction that it is manual or ‘enactive’

intelligence that distinguishes the human species by allowing for the use of the manufacture of tools and by establishing the conditions necessary for the creation of culture. Bruner (1975) viewed the mastery of certain skills developmentally as a gradual process that begins with the mastery of suitable skills. Consequently, the management of skill may be the first realisation or embodiment of programmes that will be used throughout the person's life, not only for the mastery of skilled tasks, but also for problem solving of a kind not usually thought of as a skill in the bodily sense.

I will now look at how language is mastered and becomes a skill for children in Bruner's viewpoint. This is important for curriculum planners, teacher trainers and teachers planning for language attainment.

1.6.3 From children's communication to the mastery of talk

In order to inform curriculum theory and teaching practice it is important to know what it is that children develop through communication. As Chomsky (1975a:23) said,

“ simply having the evidence presented to you is not enough for learning (language).....we must discover what is necessary to get the system to function”.

I will begin this exploration on the topic of the development of talk by quoting one of the recent British Government's mission statements (Early Years Edu-Fax, 2000:25) for the learning of language at the Foundation stage. I will look at this document more critically in chapter four. At this stage I will

use it only as a reference point in order to see what is expected in the teaching of language by schools and teachers. I will then examine the findings of Bruner and his colleagues in this regard. In the Early Learning Goals (1999), in the section for 'Communication, Language and Literacy' the document states that,

"Language and literacy depend on learning and being competent in a number of key skills, together with having the confidence, opportunity, encouragement, support, and disposition to use them. This area of learning includes speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes, reading a range of simple texts, and writing for a variety of purposes".

Bruner (1975) suggests three ways that children master language:

1. When they are able to make utterances that conform to the rules of the grammar.
2. When they become capable to 'refer' and to 'mean'.
3. When they 'get things done with words', through communication in the sense of request, indicate, ingratiate, promise, support, show respect.

These are the skills the young child needs to master a language, and the method to teach these skills is through interdependence. A similar philosophy about children's language has been developed by Halliday (1975) through the functions of language, and Bakhtin (Dentith, 1995) in the

dialogic relationship between mother-child and speaker-listener. According to Bruner (1975) language acquisition begins before the child utters his/her first lexicogrammatical speech, when mother and infant create different verbal interactions which serve their communication and constitute a shared reality. In language learning, Bruner extends Chomsky's (1975) 'Language Acquisition Device, LAD' - the child possesses a unique and predisposing set of language-learning capacities - to 'Language Acquisition Support System, LASS' (1983), that is framing and structuring the input of language and interaction to the child's Language Acquisition Device, in a manner to 'make the system function'. Bruner (1983) suggests that the interaction between LAD and LASS can enable the infant to enter the linguistic community and at the same time, the culture to which the language provides access. This process starts from pre-linguistic communication to early lexicogrammatical speech. Characteristics of this transition time, as suggested by Bruner, may provide Early Years practitioners with concepts to incorporate into planning for language teaching in Early Years. These can be summarised as follows.

1. Human competence is both biological in origin (capacity for intelligent action has an evolutionary history) and cultural in the means by which it finds expression (exercise of that capacity depends upon modes of acting and thinking that exist not in the genes but in culture) (see Bruner, 1983).
2. The endowment of human beings is a twofold process based on capacities but also how humans are aided in expressing them through the

medium of culture (see Bruner, 1983); the sociocultural contexts that fit and even compel human beings to operate in the culture. Bruner (1983:24) states that,

“Language is the means for interpreting and regulating the culture. The interpreting and negotiating start the moment the infant enters the human scene. It is at this stage of interpretation and negotiation that language acquisition is acted out. So we shall look at ‘endowment’ from the point of view of how it equips the infant to come on stage in order to acquire the means for taking his place in culture”.

The ‘endowment’ that educationalists in the Early Years can benefit from in Bruner’s investigation of infancy and through which they can adjust the teaching practice in the Early Years can be described as follows: in the cognitive processing the child is actively converting experience into structures and operates in support of goal-directed activity (see Bruner, 1983:24). From the beginning, his/her life is social and communicative. The child obtains things on his/her own and social interaction, social responses (verbal, facial and manual gestures) to the infant are the most powerful reinforcement one can use in ordinary learning situations (Bruner, 1983:27). Intersubjectivity in the sense of mutual attention and commonality, communication in the child’s interaction with an adult is one of the most important external rewards for the child’s self recognition, achievement and further development (Bruner, 1983). These concepts and ideas address the

social and communicative factors in infants' development and have been incorporated in the philosophy and methodology of Drama in Education as I will attempt to describe in the second chapter of this thesis.

The four cognitive 'endowments' that facilitate infants' entry into the world of language and culture are:

1. Readiness to find or invent systemic ways of dealing with social requirements and linguistic forms through varied, combined and generative efforts.
2. The acquisition of prelinguistic and linguistic communication with an adult takes place in constraint settings in which they extract meanings, assign interpretations and infer intentions.
3. Children's grammar is constituted by the child's actual speech and the ongoing actions and other elements of the context in which speech occurs. Speech and non-speech alike provide the road for communicative effectiveness.
4. Infants during their first year appear to have rules for dealing with space, time and even causation.

The reference to infants' cognitive development provides information that could be taken into consideration in planning to teach language. This theory also links speech actions with the formation of language in a more systematic and advanced way, as information by which human beings construct models of their world. It may finally inform a potential teaching

methodology for the development of speech in Early Years (4-5 year olds), I will now examine how this information is obtained.

1.6.4 Enactive, Iconic and Symbolic representation

Bruner (1972:161) states that,

“human beings construct models of their world through action, imagery and language and through integration whereby acts are organised into higher order ensembles, making possible the use of larger and larger units of information for the solution of a particular problem”.

These acts exercise ‘memory’ but most importantly of all retrieve what is relevant in some useful form: how past experiences coded and processed in infancy play an important role in the present process of representation.

However, according to Bruner (1972) language acquisition, similar to infants but with different tasks and different objectives in early childhood, passes through two important stages: the stage of ‘representation’ and the stage of ‘transformation’. Representation takes place in the order of enactive, iconic and symbolic form, each depending upon the previous one for its development. This is similar to Halliday’s (1978) view on the development of speech. Each phase is dependent upon the previous one for ‘speech acts’ to mature. Enactive representation is a mode of representing past events through appropriate motor response. Iconic representation summarises events by the selective organisation of perceptions and images, by the

spatial, temporal and qualitative structures of the perceptual field and their transformed images. Images 'stand for' perceptual events in a selective way that a picture stands for the object pictured.

The transition from the iconic to symbolic representation takes place when the child achieves the use of grammar, usually late in the second year of life (Bruner, 1972). Therefore language provides a means not only for representing experience, but also for transforming it. The transformation of experience that leads to the production of new meanings provides evidence that the child has internalised language as a cognitive instrument. This is what Vygotsky (1962) and Luria (1961) called second signal system, the internalised linguistic system for shaping and transforming experience itself (see 1.4.2).

Therefore intellectual growth depends upon the emergence of two forms of competence (Bruner, 1974).

- a. Children as they grow must acquire ways of representing the recurrent regularities in their environment.
- b. They must also transcend the momentary by developing ways of linking past to present to future - representation and integration.

Once language becomes a medium for the translation of experiences, there is a progressive release from immediacy (Bruner, 1974). In this context, children's language has the new and powerful features of remoteness and arbitrariness: it permits productive, combinatorial operations in the absence

of what is represented. With this achievement the child can delay gratification by virtue of representing to himself what lies beyond the present, what other possibilities exist beyond the clue that is presented to him.

The process of internalisation in language depends upon interaction with others, the need to develop corresponding categories and transformations for communal action. Drama as a learning medium and as an art form can potentially address some of these issues and may be able to form a practice that can incorporate representation, consistency, linkage in time and space, immediate use of language through the translation of experience, delay of gratification through tension and surprise, internalisation. All of these will be explored at a later stage.

With regard to Bruner's (1975) philosophy of 'mind', 'language' and 'education', I will now refer to his notion of 'Spiral Curriculum' which creates a basis for a more holistic approach to children's education in schools, and can also argue for an Early Years Curriculum that places high expectations on the philosophy of teaching and practice.

1.6.5 Towards a 'Spiral Curriculum' in education: the notion of 'scaffolding' and play in the process of instructed learning

'Spiral Curriculum' is a metaphoric term aiming to describe the implicit pedagogy of a 'natural' mode of learning where the adult transmitter of language aids the child up the spiral (Bruner, 1975). With reference to language learning, Bruner (1975) suggests that teachers should abandon in

large part the grammar-writing procedures of the developmental linguistic approach and examine the prerequisite sensory, motor, conceptual and social skills whose co-ordination makes language possible. Teachers should find ways of investigating the constituent skills involved in language before language begins, following the communicative behaviour of particular children until a particular level of linguistic mastery is achieved, testing as well for other, concomitant indices of growth. Clearly Bruner places adults who relate to children's learning or teachers in a role of the investigator or researcher who looks for information beyond the 'limits of his mind and his world', quoting Wittgenstein's (1976) famous phrase.

Bruner shifts our understanding of language and language teaching to more functional, pragmatic and communicative approaches such as those of Campell & Wales, (1970) and away from syntactic competence in the sense employed by Chomsky (1965) and McNeil (1970a, 1970b). He does not only see language as the teaching or learning about language but he sees it as a vehicle for instruction to assess how linguistic or communicative competence facilitates or inhibits the conduct of learning or of instruction.

The adult investigator starts by selecting a 'target' process in later speech and explores its precursors in later 'pre-speech'. She concentrates upon forms of communication fulfilled partially or fully by gestural or other expression. This communication will, in later speech, become the linguistic means. This happens because there is continuity between functionally

equivalent forms of communication before and after the onset of speech proper (Bruner, 1975). This process takes the form of 'scaffolding' by which an adult assists a child in carrying out a task beyond her/his capacity. It draws parallels to Vygotsky's ZOPD, the tool-and-result method which is the construct of knowledge through appropriate use of 'tools' (educational stimuli) that will motivate the child's attention (interpsychological input) to the process by which 'control' of the task is transferred from the adult to the child or the expert to the novice (intrapsychological/new understanding).

Because an 'intuitive' grasp of an idea precedes its more formal comprehension as part of a structured set of conceptual relationships, language learning, then, it is virtually the model of a spiral curriculum.

Bruner's hypothesis (1986:202) is that,

"any subject can be taught to anyone at any age in some form that is honest and useful. The burden of proof is upon those who teach, as well as those who learn".

An example that illuminates his quote is the teaching of literature and science. The desirable aim of literature is to give children an awareness of the meaning of tragedy and a sense of compassion for it; in science, an understanding of number, measure and probability. Then instruction ensues in these subjects as intellectually honestly and as early as possible in a manner consistent with the child's forms of thought and in a manner that illuminates but does not threaten (Bruner, 1986). Therefore, it should follow

that a curriculum ought to be built around the great issues, principles, and values that a society deems worthy of the continual concern of its members.

Bruner places much emphasis upon 'play' in relation to language through instructional learning. But I think he looks at play more from its communicative qualities for example, sensorimotor bodily games, where a child indicates to an object, refers to it, names it, the adult hides the object, the child seeks, rather than as a medium that facilitates learning. Some other examples of playful modes of learning according to Bruner are the mother-child successful relationship in creating an inter-subjective environment for communication and any learning to take place. Within this relationship the mother can succeed in and capture the object intended, in spite of any barrier. Also, established and reversible role relationships that provide a primitive base for later linguistic reference like the 'Peekaboo' game (Greenfield & Smith, 1976). That is an example of reversible role structures, bound as it is by rule constraints with respect to who the recipient is and who the agent of coverings and uncoverings is, and how these may be reversed. Bruner appreciates the role of action and body (facial, gestures), communication, voical qualities such as change of tone, pace, rhythm in language acquisition, and all his dedication to the research of infants' acquisition of language in mother-child instructed learning supports his argument that the acquisition of language is based on action and communication in familiar contextual environments first. De-contextualised

language is language that has been firstly obtained in a familiar social context.

Bruner (1974) did not see the full range of possibilities for meaningful and contextualised learning that structured play can achieve by using language in an interactive educational process as a metaphor with stories and books as educational tools. Although he (Bruner, 1975:27) referred to "learn how to represent the world in a fashion that is less dependent on context, how to think about the world in a fashion that has long recourse to a symbolic system, with occasional reference to the world of extralinguistic events in order to check whether thought is doing right by the world", in his writings he does not indicate how the use of symbolic language (metaphors and analogies) operate in a 'second dimension' level (intralinguistically) through the interactive learning. Moreover, his pedagogical views on 'activity learning', interactive and instructed teaching/learning process and his notion of 'spiral curriculum' can encourage schools and teachers to abandon isolation and lateral thinking and invest more into co-operative work and joint projects and possibly will create sub-communities among students in schools.

1.7 Summary

Children's social languages are ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing and feeling. They also contain the use of body, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times and places. Children's social

language is 'Discourse', a form of a dialogue between 'speaking subjects'. Speech is a social phenomenon because through its active use, we build a world of activities and institutions around us. Through a process of transformation and the power of language-in action, we re-build them in the 'here-and-now'.

Some of the characteristics of oral and written language are :

1. Oral and written language varies according to the social context.
2. Oral language interacts in the 'here-and-now' shared situation or social context whilst written language can be interactive but not in the 'here-and-now'.
3. In oral language the focus of communication is 'the other', the listener, whilst in written language; central features for its form and meaning are an audience and a maker.
4. Speech is context independent and writing is context dependent. The instruments for the production of the message also differ.
5. The instrument for speech is vocal and oral whilst for writing it is the visual graphic medium of letters.
6. In speech, the planning for its production is limited by memory, whilst in writing the planning can be more structured and time cannot be a constraint.
7. Speech can be monologic whilst writing is embedded in ongoing dialogue.

Children's play produces 'signs' that express personal and social experiences (meanings), and through play they try to get it across to 'another' to whom they are speaking. The notion of children's design and play applies to 'text'.

All three researchers/educators discussed in this chapter paid particular attention to the role of children's play and the active way of dealing with themselves and the social world, in the children's development or acquisition of language.

Halliday (1985) adopted a functional social theory of language, that speech has certain functions, indicating characteristics of this speech in very young children's language. He argued that 'text addresses the issue of what it is that the individual 'can do', 'can mean' and 'can say' through language. Text is language in action, it is 'what is meant presupposing of what might have been meant but was not (the meaning potential). The context of the situation is, for Halliday (1975), the medium through which the text lives and breathes. Vygotsky's (1962) multidisciplinary approach addressed the issue of 'children's egocentric speech' as expressed by Piaget (1952), and identified the social factors that drive children's speech towards problem solving situations, and the various communicative factors through speech acquisition in an inter-personal and intra-personal level. Play, the use of tools and objects as pivots and the instruction process in teaching develop the child holistically in terms of the ZOPD, the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Bruner's sociocognitive approach to language learning provides us with interesting ideas for curriculum development and a new approach to teaching. Speech, for Bruner (1974), is verbal and non-verbal, and words communicate personal and social meanings in interaction with 'another'. Language production, for Bruner is skilled behaviour as a problem solving situation. He extended Chomsky's 'Language Acquisition Device' to 'Language Acquisition Support System'. He sees any form of learning as a 'scaffolding' process and playful modes of interactive learning as central constituents in this process.

The notion of children's discourse-making, was defined as an active cognitive, psychological and physical process for children to make sense of the world, culture and history, and communicate intrapersonal experiences and understandings about the world with the world in an interpersonal level. However, different children make sense of different meanings and the sense they make is always product of their environment and upbringing. Part of this process of meaning-making occurs through discourse-making in classrooms and other public arenas.

The schema below (Figure 3) is a comparative account of the socio-cultural theories and practices of learning and literacy explored in this chapter with respect to children's meaning-making and speech in the development of

early understandings. It aims to cross-reference the theory as examined in order to theoretically enrich the second chapter when the practical applications of discourse and meaning-making through Drama in Education will be examined.

In the first column I present the features of discourse that are emerging through this thesis. In the following columns the principal theories that have been looked at are cross-referenced.

Figure 3: Discourse-making and meaning in language

<u>Discourse-making</u> (describes children as makers of meaning). The sociocultural character of language.	<u>Halliday</u> (focuses on child-parent relationship: the child and another exchange meanings in a context of cultural interaction (initiation and response). Deatailed analysis of children's learning development of language but focused on parental interactions.	<u>Vygotsky</u> (meaning is 'mediated' through formal instruction, ZOPD, provided by an adult or more capable peers) Emphasis on learning through imaginative experience but did not described the extent to which children engage in fictitious contexts.	<u>Bruner</u> (Less emphasis on meaning-making. Inter-subjective environment is the pre-requisite for communication and any learning that takes place). Similar to Halliday's views about parental relationships: playful modes of learning such as mother-child successful relationship can create successful learning.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children are makers of signs which they use for the expression of their meaning.2. Speech is language-in-action and is used in a motivated manner in the representation and communication of meaning.3. Children build 'realities' (discourse-making) through tools and objects (painting, drawing, symbolism and role play).4. Words are materials out of which one can fashion new signs; and these new signs express our meanings.5. Culture6. Negotiating and regulating inter-personal behaviours in public, rather than domestic contexts.7. Developing social, moral, spiritual and affective personality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Language is the encoding of a 'behavioural potential' into a 'meaningful potential'; what humans 'can do' in interaction by turning it into what they 'can mean'. What they 'can mean' (the semantic system) is encoded into what they 'can say'(lexicogrammati cal system).2. Through language (activity and narrative associated with culture) the child learns a system of meaningful behaviour, a semiotic system.3. Meaning is actualised in particular situations (contexts of the situation).4. Meaning develops in the 'ideational' function of language where the child's expression of meaning in language involves both reflection on and interaction with the social system.5. Play is the functional use of language.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Objects referring to words signify meaning e.g. the stick becomes a 'pivot' for the transference of meaning.2. Through language the child transforms his/her environment to create meaning.3. In play 'action' is subordinated to meaning.4. Play is a revolutionary (transformational) function of language.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children master language when they become capable to 'refer' and to 'mean'.2. 'Play' as a medium for communication can facilitate learning.

Chapter Two

Drama as Text

**Drama in Education, a tool for contextualised
discourse-making in Early Years language teaching
and learning**

2.1 Introduction

Before mapping out the ground I propose to cover in this chapter, I need at the outset to clarify the terms 'Theatre', 'Drama' and 'Drama in Education' for two reasons. Firstly, these notions are problematic, contested and misunderstood by mainstream and Drama teachers partly because of the history of Drama in Education in England (see Hornbrook, 1989; Davis, 1986; 1992; Neelands, 1997, 2000a, 2000; Bolton, 1998, 2000; O' Neill, 1995) and partly because these definitions are in flux in culture generally. One of the ways that teachers conceptualise role play and Drama and Theatre in the classroom is to make it synonymous with Theatre and Performance. In my view, this negates the full range of practice potentially available to teachers and the distinction between these varied practices of Drama will be important when later in this thesis my proposed model for teaching and learning in the Early Years is explored. The following questions arise: where do the notions of Drama, Theatre and Drama in Education originate? What are their common elements? What are their differences? Do they teach skills? Are they aesthetic and/or artistic experiences? Are they products or processes?

Secondly, historically there has been a long debate (see: Hornbrook, 1989; Bolton, 1998, 2000; Neelands, 1997; 2000; Neelands and Dobson, 2000) as to whether 'Drama' is another way to talk about 'Theatre' or whether 'Drama' should be taught as a branch of literary studies, as dramatic literature and hence, divorced from the theatrical process (see: Fortier, 1997; Banks and Marson, 1985; Culpeper, Short and Verdonk, 1998; Neelands and Dobson, 2000). In addition, another species called 'Drama in Education' has claimed its place in between 'Theatre' and 'Drama', (see: Bolton, 1979; 1984; 1992; Neelands, 2000).

2.2 Towards an understanding of the notions 'Drama', 'Theatre' and 'Drama in Education'

The attempt to define Drama raises complicated issues that mark the differences between the text of a play and its interpretation with the audience's realisation of the 'text' (see: Debord, 1970; Williams, 1975; Inglis in Carey, Clark & Goode, 1994). Throughout its history, Drama has been seen more as pure 'text', part of dramatic literature studies, and confused many times with 'Theatre'. Drama in the 20th century has become one of the principle vehicles of information, a form of communication to an audience, one of the prevailing methods of 'thinking' about life and its situations (Esslin, 1987). Drama includes the body of written work called 'dramatic literature', and some of its main characteristics are, narrative, plot, dialogue, action, tension, characters who resonate personal relationships or events that echo social, historical and cultural surroundings. It is a mere narration of events, 'in character' though when it takes place in a-here-and-now time and space, as lying in the past and creating an eternal present, it is 'Theatre' (see Brook, 1993).

For the purpose of this thesis, a working conceptualisation of Drama, a definition of its elements, aesthetics, values and purposes, is needed. Drama is performed or unperformed literature. As performed literature, it becomes a 'cultural space'; it makes use of all the art forms (the aesthetic dimension) in order to communicate the meaning of a text to an audience. This communication may take the form of verbal activity through the use of the medium of language.

Performance on stage is not a necessary prerequisite of Drama. However, dramatic texts or plays contain very rich indications as to how they should be performed (see: Culpeper, Short and Verdonk, 1998). Searle (1975a:328) states that the author of a play gives "directions as to how to enact a

pretence which the actors then follow” because fictional or not, the ritualistic and ceremonial elements of a play may contain real heightened intensity of incident and emotion (see: Stanislavski, 1950; 1981; Mitter, 1992; Esslin, 1987; Neelands and Dobson, 2000). Dramatic texts may be performed on stage and through a multitude of photographic and electronic mass media, cinema, television, videotape, radio, cassette recording (see: Esslin, 1987), or may remain unperformed. When dramatic texts are performed, they are then plays available to directors. Drama uses the art form of acting as well as various theatrical conventions to make the meaning of the dramatic text available to an audience. Drama that can ‘re-enact’ past events, in a way that puts them before an audience as though they were happening at that very moment, is ‘Theatre’ (see: Etherton, 1982; Gaster, 1961).

Theatre, as Counsel (1996:30) describes is “a performing art, a live art...and it involves the simultaneous presence of both spectator and performer... It is a cultural space and also an art form. As an art form it has a plot, a narrative, a series of events and actions which succeed each other according to a causal or developmental logic and it is enacted live, by performers who occupy the same physical time/space as the audience”. Brown (1995:50) insists that, “theatre has its full life only in moments of performance before an audience”. This is also the main difference between Theatre and Drama.

Drama performed on stage can also use all the other arts: painting, sculpture and architecture to represent the environment, music to provide mood, rhythm - and indeed to represent the practice of music (people shown singing or dancing within the context of the world that is being represented); and of course ‘literature’ in the widest sense, for its verbal element (see: Elam, 1980).

However, the word ‘Theatre’ as Brook (1993:81) states “is vague, meaningless and creates confusion” because people speak about different

aspects of it when they try to communicate its meaning. Theatre is not to do with buildings, nor with texts, actors, styles or forms. The essence of theatre is within a mystery called 'the present moment'. Brook's description of 'Theatre' has the potential to bring together the two traditions of 'Theatre' and 'Drama' into the creation of a new applied field that has clearly an educational purpose, that is, 'Drama in Education'.

The field of Drama in Education may contain some of the above characteristics of Drama and Theatre. It can happen in different spaces (schools, halls, theatres, prisons), and can be a process (devising, facilitating, assessing, assisting, negotiating) and/or a product (performance) (see: Bolton, 1979; 1984; 1992; Heathcote in Johnson and O' Neill, 1984; Bolton and Heathcote, 1999; Heathcote and Bolton, 1995; Neelands, 1984; 1990; 1992; Woolland, 1993; O' Neill and Lambert, 1982; O' Neill, 1995; Morgan and Saxton, 1987; Fleming, 1994; 1997; Oddey, 1994; Cattanach, 1996). Drama in Education or Educational Drama has been defined by one of its most important pioneers, Dorothy Heathcote, (1971: 43) in the following way.

" I define educational drama as being 'anything which involves persons in active role-taking situations in which attitudes, not characters are the chief concern, lived at life-rate (i.e. discovery at this moment, not memory based) and obeying the natural laws of the medium... I maintain that problem-solving is the basis of learning and maturation".

For the purpose of this thesis, a working conceptualisation of Drama, a definition of its elements, aesthetics, values and purposes, is needed. Drama is performed or unperformed literature. As performed literature, it becomes a 'cultural space'; it makes use of all the art forms (the aesthetic dimension) in order to communicate the meaning of a text to an audience. This communication may take the form of verbal activity through the use of the medium of language.

In this study Drama in Education is employed as an art form, as a methodological process and as a teaching tool to explore language as discourse and language-in-action (discourse-making) for three reasons:

1. Firstly, because the Arts (drama, music, dance, painting, sculpture) may provide pupils with the potential to not only explore the medium but also to make use of the medium in order to learn about themselves and the world they live in and participate (see: Best, 1992; Brook, 1993; Bond in O' Sullivan and Williams, 1998; Robinson, 1982; Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 1998).
2. Secondly, Drama and the other Arts share a common feature with play. Children can invent different ways of involving themselves in an event that is similar to life but in present time, in here-and-now, free from the burden of time, places and viewpoints and potentially become spectators of themselves reflecting on their encounters (see: Boal, 1995).
3. Finally, language and Drama share common characteristics which will be elaborated upon at a later stage. Drama uses verbal and non-verbal means of communication. Drama as text is language-in-action (see: Saussure in Harris, 1983, Halliday and Hasan, 1985, Halliday, 1975; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). It is a narrative and a kinaesthetic means for transformation of action into experience through metaphors, analogies and by being spectators of ourselves (see: Neelands, 1987, Shillingford, 1994).

In this chapter I intend to demonstrate how these definitions may align with the social theories of language in order to show how language in drama operates through action, interaction, non-linguistic signs, objects, tools, technologies and ways of feeling, valuing and believing. Elements from the theory and practice of Drama in Education that may provide a social context for meaningful teaching and learning will be considered in the ensuing sections. The varied drama practices that make language- in-action an active learning process and specifically in relation to the theoretical framework that

has been offered by Gee (1999), Halliday (1975, 1978, 1985), Vygotsky (1985, 1993) and Bruner (1974, 1986) in chapter one will be examined. The final aim of this chapter is to explore the kind of 'discourse-making' that children engage in in drama process. The following questions will be addressed in order to glean a greater understanding of the role and value of Drama in Education in Early Years language teaching and learning: can Drama in Education provide a comprehensive and effective methodology for teaching and learning language in the Early Years environment? Can Drama in Education assist the children's 'language potential' (Halliday, 1975, 1978) in a social context of learning and teaching? These questions will be elaborated on in the following sections through a literature review.

2.3 Drama as dialogic discourse

Whilst the focus of this thesis is the study of speech as a genre of young children's language development in a social context, in this section I will view Drama as text, as an art form and as an educational tool to examine potential links between the nature of Drama and the nature of language in speech, and ultimately the performance of speech acts through the medium of Drama. More specifically, the textual elements of Drama will be examined and particular attention will be paid to the dialogic discourse of Drama in Education, which implies communication and discourse.

The nature of Drama as text embodies narrative forms of language, cultural elements and meaning-making procedures at a personal and a social level. The first two, the narrative and the cultural elements refer mostly to the content of Drama as text and as a living process but also as art in the sense of the embodied action in living processes (see: Bakhtin in Morris, 1994; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). I will refer to the last one, the meaning-making element of Drama, as dialogue, discourse and as an educational process.

The art of Drama uses the art of narrative as an act of creativity and imagination and allows narrators to become storytellers, to create events, characters, attitudes, experiences, outcomes (see: Egan, 1986; 1988; 1988; Booth, 1994; Paley, 1990). In Neeland's description (1987:55), "Drama may be one of the language situations that opens up narrative possibilities, that allows spontaneous narrative to enter naturally into the flow of talk - every kind of story from personal experience to literary fictions- so that the narrative mode can be an integral part of the school curriculum, thus embedding the story in the learning". The nature of language (oral or written) involves human activity in personal, social and cultural settings. This activity can be expressed as a text, as narrative or as a theme. What I mean by theme is Halliday's (1978) notion of 'field' in the sense of 'content', an important ingredient of any text or narrative which has the potential to fulfil the prerequisites for the communication of meaning to participants in a communication event or to an audience in a performance level (see: Fleming, 1997; Neelands, 1987; 1992). Therefore narrative is a 'means' of shaping theme.

For Barton (1983) narrative in the form of stories is a way of organising human experiences and a framework for learning. For Hardy (1977:21) "narrative is a primary act of mind transferred to art from life". It is also a constant attempt at exchanging identities, remaking the past, a mode of looking back in order to go forward, a historical activity of humanity. Hardy (1997:22) describes activities of narrative such as dreaming, daydreaming, remembering, anticipating, hoping, believing, doubting, learning, loving, hating as actions embodied in human living processes. Barton and Booth (1990:12-13) emphasise that, "storying is an essential element of consciousness...it is part of what it means to be human and ultimately, quality of living is related to the narrative models that have become available to an individual".

What therefore are the elements that bring Drama, Art and language together? What makes the art form of drama an educational tool that may develop the children's potential and their desire to learn language?

Firstly, there are two common elements between the above three disciplines: the concepts of 'time' and 'space' (Brook, 1993). Drama as a 'mimetic action' unfolding in the present re-enacts fictional or real past events in a here - and -now space and time, whilst the visual arts happen in space without extension in time but by freezing time (Brook, 1993). Language and the means of narrative in Drama move in time without spatial extension. Esslin (1987:36) illustrates this ongoing process: "the verbal portion of the dramatic event, insofar as it is present, proceeds, like a text a reader takes from the printed page, through time in a linear fashion, one word following another". These concepts of 'time and space' in relation to early years language and its development through Drama, is the language that the child creates in Gee's 'six areas of reality' (1999), in Halliday's (1987) Phase I of language the 'imaginative function', and also reflected in Phases II and III. These concepts are also present in Vygotsky's (Newman and Holzman, 1993) notion of language as a non-static phenomenon which is in 'a state of perpetual motion that appears and disappears': an idea influenced by Hegel's dialectics. In Drama therefore, the 'cultural space' or context of meaning is immediate, self-consciously realised and material framed for all the interactions and interpretations.

A second area that links Drama, language and the Arts is the process of 'discourse-making' in creative, communicational and learning terms. Language meets the nature of Drama at this stage, that is 'narrative' and 'action' subordinated to socially and culturally negotiated and constructed 'meaning'. Hegel (Boguslavski, 1975) found that human beings were able to discover a truth (meaning) which was already installed in the object. However, Hornbrook (1991) expresses a romantic view that meaning is

subjective; the subjective essence in each one of us must be encouraged to express itself and that it is possible to find an objective reality out there that is, objective reality can be represented. Szatkowski (1992: 23) comments on Hornbrook's interpretation of the Subject/Object philosophical debate about 'how do language and consciousness arise?' as follows:

"Behind Hornbrook's flirtation with the new philosophical trends we find an implicit moral idealism, which certainly is defined in opposition to romantic idealism, but in principle it has not transcended the subject / object dichotomy".

Saussure (1974) notes that signs derive 'meaning' from their relation to other signs. Wittgenstein (1968) explains that the meaning of a word derives largely from its use. In Hermeneutics (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) 'meaning-making' is mediated through social and cultural construction.

This area will also be addressed further below when I describe Drama as dialogue, as discourse and as an educational process. At this stage I will specifically look at the concept of 'meaning-making' as a sign-system and I will make connections with young children's early language as a sign system in the way that was described in chapter one.

2.4 'Meaning-making' as a sign system

As we have seen in chapter one children's education is based on developing and using a shared language with teachers which is necessary in order to facilitate both an informed and informing process of collaboration and communication for learning purposes (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). This process I have referred to as 'discourse-making'. In chapter one, language has been described as a dynamic action that builds up worlds of interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies and ways of thinking, valuing, feeling and believing. In Gee's 'six areas of children's reality' (1999), children talk and act unconsciously negotiating tools and materials (symbol systems) to make sense of the world around them.

Kress (1997) has also described speech as material words 'out of which we can fashion new signs' that express meaning. Halliday (1975) views language as a signifier and signified, meaningful, communicational process that takes place in particular situations. In Halliday (1975), the whole semantic system of language focuses on the meaning 'potential' of the text. Vygotsky's (Moll, 1990) approach to language looks at the pedagogical tools and signs that mediate language to motivate meaning-making and problem-solving learning environments. Bruner (1986) also refers to speech as verbal and non-verbal acts that communicate personal and social meanings in interaction with 'another'. Children communicate, act and interact using their senses. In the production of speech and in communication and learning, the vocal, hearing and sight organs play a significant role. Actions and sounds usually develop before words and may become building blocks in the production of speech and the learning of language (see also chapter one:5-7). In the field of social semiotics Pierre Guiraud (1975) examines the systems of relations (communication and signification) between individuals and/or groups and views theatrical representation as a mirror of social interactions. In Guiraud's description (1975:92-8) the spectator in theatre will 'read' the play in relation to meaning that is signified and communicated through social interactions. Therefore according to Guiraud (1975) the activities that identify signification and communication in language can fall under the following four categories:

1. "Protocols, which function to establish and regulate communication.
2. Rituals, which affirm 'the solidarity of individuals relative to religious, national or social obligations contracted by the community'.
3. Fashions, which assert, as fact or aspiration, membership of a specific group.
4. Games, representations of social reality within which participants are positioned to enact, and to experience effectively, aspects of that reality".

In addition to their social and communicational character, the signs, according to Guiraud (1975: 90) have an 'iconic' nature "and are related to aesthetic signs". Therefore in the theatrical representation two categories of signs correspond.

1. " Signs of identity, which mark the individual as an adherent of a specific social group. Such signs include coats of arms, flags, totems etc.; uniforms, insignia and decorations; tatoos, make-up, hair-styles, etc.; names and nicknames.
2. Behavioural signs, which mark actual or desired relationships between individuals. Such signs include tone of voice; greetings and expressions of politeness; insults; kinesics; proxemics." (Guiraud: 84-90).

Both categories of signs may also apply to education because they pay attention to the kind of language that a group of people often use in particular social and cultural settings and time. In education, the language that is used by teachers inside and outside learning situations has implications for the content, the quality, the standards and the production of learning (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Wagner, 1976; Hasan and Martin, 1989). 'Discourse-making' in accordance with the social theories of language (as discussed in chapter one) implies a semiotic situation where verbal and non-verbal signs such as physical interrelation of bodies in space and proxemics can also articulate or represent social meaning (for example, high status/low status, close/neutral distance and so on). Guiraud's (1975) systems of relations (communication and signification) in personal and social interactions reflect the various art forms, outlined in the introduction of this chapter, employed by Drama, Theatre and Drama in Education to implement signification and communication in the creative process. In this context, Drama is always reflexive of people's social and cultural lives; it is a 'knowing' mode of representation as well as a mode of aesthetic experiencing (see Best, 1992; Brecht, 1964 and Boal, 1979).

In education, Drama has been used by its practitioners as a balance between actual living and full engagement with theatre, as they both use verbal and non-verbal means of communication and the same network of signs, metaphors and analogies to create contact and meaning between people that communicate in particular situations (Neelands, 2000). In describing drama as a potential medium to develop children's 'discourse-making' in the Early Years, we may also see drama as 'a mediated learning experience' which may play a role in shaping children's ability to interpret and act upon the world. This draws upon the relevant theory in the 'development of skills in infancy' and 'from children's communication to the mastery of talk' as described in Bruner's (1974; 1986) socio-cognitive approach to Early Language. The parent-child playful interactions in Bruner's theory and in other theories that emphasise the role of play in learning and language communication, serve to develop important skills for learning achievements as later required by the National Curriculum in England towards attaining high standards in education. These include concept attainment, problem-solving, use of symbols, mastery of language and abstract thinking. Prior to the development of such skills the social theories of language highlight the important role that the mastery of skilled behaviour together with language production play in infancy. The mastery of skilled behaviour and language is what Halliday (1978) outlined as 'potential language and situated meaningful learning'; what Vygotsky and Luria (1968) described as 'Zone of Proximal Development'; and what Bruner (1975) exemplified as a 'scaffolding process'. In this context, in mastering language through play and through adult (parent, carer, teacher) interaction (see chapter one), the infant's engagement with the world could be represented in the following schema:

- 1) The child converts previous experience into structures.
- 2) The child operates in goal-oriented activities.

- 3) The child builds up inter-subjectivity, mutual attention and commonality in interaction with an adult.
- 4) The child builds up readiness to find or invent systemic ways of dealing with social requirements and linguistic forms through varied, combined and generative efforts.
- 5) The child extracts meanings, assigns interpretations and infers intentions in structured settings.

Therefore, in a caring family environment, the first crucial period for the child's general development takes place at a preliminary stage under parents' guidance and support through play and playful activities. As a result, in Early Years, which is the first institutionalised form of education for the young child, learning could potentially develop through similar devices such as interaction and play under the educational principles highlighted above. Play for learning, according to Vygotsky and Luria (1968) should be a structured activity that provides the instructors with clear aims and objectives, makes learning interesting, exciting and challenging and opens up for children areas of exploration in problem-solving situations. Bolton (1979: 65-66) states that "the problem and the possibility of its resolution [can be] enough to motivate the children to enter the make-believe". He continues that, "the motivation of solving a problem... and the process of solving has its own built-in learning area". Vygotsky (1933: 537) wrote that, 'in play a child deals with things as having meaning' and Bolton (1988:176) commenting on Vygotsky's writings suggests that "whereas in 'real life' action is prioritised over meaning, the opposite occurs in make-believe play". The 'make- believe' play is an imaginative form of play with a fictitious element, it is symbolic play in the way described by Gee (1999) and others in chapter one where objects and actions accumulate more significant levels of meaning for the participants. In his exploration of the acting forms of Drama in Education, Bolton (1998:29) traces the beginnings of educational drama and examines Caldwell Cook's

(Bolton, 1998) 'Play activity', where " 'play activity' must be seen as something more than an amusing way of learning...it is a way of freeing the imagination, so that the deepest levels of a person can be 'brought into play'".

Dorothy Heathcote (1984:160-169), one of the great pioneers of Drama in Education uses the words 'signalling', 'signing', 'signification' and 'classroom communication', and charges teachers with the responsibility of employing signs more coherently in their teaching and replacing the "mouth talk" with "word and gesture" that can be 'read' by the class. As in Theatre, actors sign for the benefit of the audience. Heathcote (1984:165) states that, similarly children bring to school the most developed skill of all: "making sense of their own ends of sign in their immediate environment" (discourse-making). Thus teachers may use sign in order to communicate and to allow children to actively participate in the learning event with responses.

The parts of language that play an important role in sociolinguistic competence and in discourse is 'metaphor' and 'analogy'. In the following sub-sections I will deal with 'metaphor' and 'analogy' where I will elaborate upon the notion of 'signing in drama and discourse'. This ensuing discussion on 'analogy' and 'metaphor' will support the description that follows on how practitioners in the field of Drama in Education use signs, metaphors and analogies to create meaning in Drama. Both language and Drama are narrative forms of literature and they both use verbal and non-verbal conventions to communicate meaning with responders, participants, spectators or audience. According to the definition of 'discourse-making' contained in chapter one, it is an active cognitive, psychological and physical process for children to make sense of the world, culture and history and communicate intrapersonal experiences and understandings about the world with the world in an interpersonal level.

I will therefore look more specifically at the elements of Drama that are used by practitioners in education to create meaningful contexts for learning and development. These elements may also create opportunities for the development of teacher-pupil discourse in early childhood for access to Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Mathematical, Personal, Social and Creative development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World and for assessment in these areas. If one of the main tasks in the education of Early Years children is to equip them with tools that will assist their exploration in making sense of the world we live in (Heathcote, 1982; Heathcote and Bond in Byron, 1990), then the following sections may provide some evidence of the kinds of practice that teachers need to focus on during this process of learning and teaching. At this stage, the conversations between teachers and pupils are seen as 'textual practice' and Drama as one of many kinds of representations that may facilitate this interaction in the consciousness of individual subjects at many levels. This process will be further elaborated below in the sections on 'signing in drama and discourse', 'self-spectator', 'conventions', 'metaphors', and 'analogies through framing'. I will firstly examine the process of 'signing in Drama and discourse'.

2.5 Signing in Drama and discourse

The communication of meaning between subjects is considered in the field of social semiotics and discourse as social context and social reality. This issue will be explored in relation to the practices of Drama later on. The reference to 'context' at this stage serves to emphasise the importance of Drama as a social practice and the interconnection between Drama as a social practice and discourse that will be explored through the convention of 'signs' in Drama in Education. Aston and Savona (1991:154) describe "social signs as both culturally and historically specific". Human beings have a tendency to infuse meaning with form (sound, marks, movements) and to therefore

describe or act through them in the social world (Aston and Savona, 1991). This kind of expression in symbol making is the basic nature of what it means to be human. Spodek and Saracho (1993:23) state that, "we as humans use symbols to liberate us from the here-and-now, to enter worlds of possibility, and, at the same time, to join with others who share the same 'imaginative universe'. People who share a culture share similar ways of infusing meaning into sounds (language), movement (dance), and lines (drawings), among other media". According to Meinhof and Richardson (1994: 69),

" 'text' in semiotics does not restrict itself to the spoken and written words but also, most importantly, includes all the other semiotic ways of encoding meaning, such as architecture, fashion, kinship systems, traffic signs..."

The relationship between Drama and Discourse is elaborated upon in the definition that Heathcote (Wagner, 1976:192-3) offers on education: "Education is a continuous process of assimilation of incoming data together with a constantly developing ability to respond". It is similarly expressed in Moffet and Wagner (1976:72),

"to perceive and take something in as full, complex, and sensitive a way as possible and then to bring it out again as words- as a statement that reflects the fullness and complexity of the experience and at the same time orders it and relates it to other knowing - is a goal worthy of any educational endeavour".

This symbolic discovery of meaning in text seems to link with the process of education, according to the above definitions. I will therefore highlight some signing conventions from the fields of Theatre and Drama in Education that may offer a useful insight to the 'textual practice' of teaching and learning discourse in general, and more particular to 'meaning-making' practices in the Early Years.

a. Working through role

Heathcote (1984:161) describes this process as “we (teachers and pupils) become part of the action of the ‘play’ (the teacher-pupil ‘play’) and have a voice in the dramatic encounter”. In this process, the teacher is both a narrator and an actor of an event that takes place in a ‘here-and-now’ place and time, and the pupils co-authors and co-actors in the same event. A narration, for example, about people or animals in a narrative event turns into action and the third person’s voice becomes first. It is not about someone else or other people’s stories that pupils listen to as outsiders, for example, ‘they played together’, but teachers and pupils become part of the same story, get involved and become part of an event, having a responsibility over it, for example, ‘let’s play together’. This is a socially- situated activity through which both teacher and pupils co-construct (co-build) socially-situated identities that is, mutual meanings, social languages, cultural models and discourses, (Halliday, 1989, 1994, 1976, 1989) and (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). Drama is about social encounters and meaning is available to others involved in this encounter through signs - people’s actions, objects, significant spaces, pauses, silences, change of voices. Similarly in the teaching/learning process, the same forms of signing allow children to use their experiences to interpret the material. In this way, the teacher may use the role to make a contract between him/herself and the class in setting up common signing procedures in their social encounters, for example, ‘do we all agree that this room is not our classroom anymore, instead it is a deep blue sea where ordinary fishes and ones with sparkling silver scales live...’. It also allows the teacher’s status greater flexibility in his/her social encounters with the class. In addition, in any social encounter the role may be used as a framing device, to provide the participants with ‘tension’ and ‘meaning’. It therefore moves the action forward and highlights the perspective from which people enter the event. Neelands (1984:88) explains the concept of ‘framing’ the dramatic

context using the Beowulf example, where the children arrived at the dramatic context from a number of different viewpoints, “as artists representing ‘Grendel’, as figures in heroic tapestries of the time, as experts considering historical relics, as great warriors planning their mission”.

In working through role, a teacher may communicate significant information through indirect sharing and giving, that of frame and attitude, through a range of signs similar to the actors in a theatre way (see: Wagner, 1976; O’ Neill, 1982; Johnson and O’ Neill, 1984; Neelands, 1984; O’ Neill, 1995; Flemming, 1997). However, many mainstream non-specialist teachers may often think that they operate in a liberal model of education where teachers and students share information, but yet they are unaware that they are still engaged in a transmission model of education. Teachers who operate in the traditional transmission model do not take the opportunity to observe their class, including their responses and suggestions and often interpret this sharing of knowledge and information process as ‘telling’ their class and they are often unaware that they transmit knowledge (Freire, 1994; 1996). In Drama in Education, this indirect taking-giving-sharing of information process takes the form of well processed questioning, an aspect of language in signing in discourse that I will focus on in a more descriptive way later.

b. Teacher language registers

In the social theories of language (chapter one) the focus of early language learning lies in the process of social interactions where the meaning of the written or verbal text is interpersonal and represents people’s experiences. Halliday and Hasan (1985), in particular, emphasise the importance of ‘experiential learning’ as a way of ‘reflecting’ and also the ‘interaction’ between speaker and listener as a way of ‘acting’, when they refer to experiential and interpersonal meaning. In the ‘textual practice’ of discourse between a speaker and a listener, the text, according to Halliday and Hasan

(1985: 30-34), becomes meaningful when it develops in situations built up by both speaker and listener and is characterised by three semantic features:

1. The **field**, that is, the child uses language to play, manipulate objects (toys) in terms of existence, possession, movement, location and the adult assists in the conversation and the introduction of new language.
2. The **tenor**, that is, the interaction between adult and child in which the child determines the course of action, expresses their own intentions, controls and shares by verbal interaction.
3. The **mode**, that is, spoken and alternate monologue and dialogue, it is task - oriented and refers to processes and objects in the situation. It also relates to and furthers the child's own actions. The mode is diffused with narrative and exploratory elements.

To incorporate the above features of text into the situation that the spoken or verbal language will take place in, Halliday and Hasan (1985) introduce the concept of variation in language that goes with variation in the context of the situation and bring in the notion of a 'register', a semantic concept, that is associated with the features of text as described above and refer to particular situations where the conversation takes place. Halliday and Hasan (1985:39) state that " a particular register has also indexical features, indices in the form of particular words, particular grammatical signals, or even sometimes phonological signals that have the function of indicating to the participants that this is the register, for example 'once upon a time', is an indexical feature that serves to signal the fact that we are now embarking on a traditional tale". This use of language in education takes the form of teaching skills (grammar, syntax) whilst the considerable selection of language registers available to the teacher may provide a more sophisticated and playful way of introducing the conventions of language. Moreover, in the Early Years, the language registers used by the teacher in a dramatic playing activity may provide opportunities for the 'field', 'tenor', and 'mode' to progress in language

learning, steps that are necessary towards language development and 'discourse-making', according to the social theories of language (see chapter one).

In Drama in Education a variety of language registers are used by the teacher in role and out of role to signify the context, time, space, to create tension and engage pupils with the content for learning that will take place, to create an appropriate climate for meaningful learning. O' Neill and Lambert (1982) comment on the positive contribution which drama makes to the curriculum, that is to provide a facilitating atmosphere for many kinds of language use. " Language is the cornerstone of the drama process and the means through which the drama is realised. Drama can provide a powerful motivation to speech, and this speech does not occur in isolation but is embedded in context and situation where it has a crucial organising function" (O' Neill and Lambert (1982: 17-18).

The language registers that teachers in educational Drama use, as described by Wagner (1979), to examine how teachers can evoke language (responses, suggestions, ideas, etc.) in learning environments will now be discussed.

Wagner (1979:37-38) describes the 'teaching registers' used by Heathcote and defines them as,

"the attitudes she employs in putting herself at the service of the class, more commonly described as 'social variations in language use'... This attitude can be exhibited whether or not the teacher is in role as a character in the drama and, if in role, in any dialect, tone, or social variation in language appropriate to the dramatic situation."

In educational Drama, the teacher in role uses an appropriate socio-economic class dialect which is directed by the chosen theme for potential learning exploration and provides a model for the pupils to follow in extending their own range of language registers. Wagner (1979) highlights the following language registers used mainly by the teacher-in role but often used out of role as well. These serve to elucidate Halliday's (1985) theory of language registers.

1. " The one-who- knows register..." (Wagner, 1979:38). "*I know that this happened because I was there...*". It is used to encourage and empower groups of children who are young, inexperienced or shy, to talk and engage, to preserve the quality of drama with pupils who have discipline problems and who may destroy the work, and also to build belief in the dramatic event.
2. " The would- you- like- to- know- register" . To give facts, if known, to request information and facilitate research.
3. "The I- have- no- idea register. For evoking responses from students to free their minds and explore an idea with the teacher".
4. " The suggester- of- implications register. To wonder with the class, presenting alternatives of action in a non - directive and open- ended way. 'I wonder, how you (travellers) are going to settle'".
5. " The interested- listener register. Where (the teacher) listens with his/her whole presence. The teacher clearly signals to the children that she/he takes in whatever they have to say and ponders, not pounces, on it. This register is another rare one for teachers. Usually they listen just long enough to pick up clues for more direction giving, saying, 'Yes, well, the thing you should do about that..' which isn't listening at all. We need to respond by taking in or repeating whatever a child says, letting her or him know that we are thinking about the words". (p.39).

6. “ The I'll get what you need register. ‘I know where you can buy some food for the Queen's baby’. The teacher puts him/herself at the service of the class, making sure that their ideas get implemented”.
7. “ The it's - no - use - asking- me register when the teacher knows that the class can function better without depending so heavily on her”. ‘It is your responsibility to find out...’.
8. “ The devil's advocate register” when the teacher is clearly signalling to the class that she /he is not speaking for her/himself, but is in role and tries to unite the class against her/him in order to create productive arguments and reveal responses from the pupils.
9. “ The going- along register where (the teacher) agrees to whatever the group has decided and often assesses the dramatic potential of a class' decision and decides what her next register will be” (Wagner, 1979: 38-41).

These language registers highlight how drama can potentially provide a model to teach language in the Early Years. In the context of Vygotsky's (1990) Zone of Proximal Development for example, language development is viewed as an internalised social experience and social language shapes the language of the individual in the sense that learners are actively seeking sense in the world. In this sense language is not learned by imitating adults or learning rules out of the context of language use but it is invented by each individual, and in the context of its social use it is adapted to the social conventions (Goodman and Goudman, 1990). The teacher in Heathcote's (Wagner, 1979) system of 'language registers' does not instruct but mediates through the creation of authentic experiences (Drama and imaginative social contexts) for pupils to self-mediate in speech acts and literacy events. This will become more apparent in the discussion in following sections, about how Heathcote's use of the 'self-spectator' construct could mediate action and interaction. Vygotsky (1978:118) states:

“The best method [for teaching reading and writing] is one in which children do not learn to read and write but in which both these skills are found in play situations. ... In the same way as children learn to speak, they should be able to learn to read and write”.

Heathcote’s system of ‘language registers’ is a similar approach to the ‘whole-language’ view of literacy development originated in the United States and more recently in other English-speaking countries such as in Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Raines and Canady, 1990). Similarly to Heathcote’s use of language registers in play situations the ‘whole-language’ approach also stresses (Goodman and Goodman, 1990:229) “the importance of authentic activities in which language, both oral and written, serves in real and functional ways”. Vygotsky (1978:102) discusses the role of play as a context in which the Zone of Proximal Development is activated:

“Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development”.

Halliday (1980), like Vygotsky (1986) in his social theory of language uses the phrase ‘how to mean’. Learners experience the wide variety of functions and forms of language, they internalise the way their society uses language to represent meaning. So they are learning language, they are learning about language and at the same time they are using language to learn. All three kinds of language learning must be simultaneous (Halliday, 1980).

c. Questioning

In chapter one I discussed 'speech' as a social phenomenon. Kress (1997), Gee (1999), Halliday (1975; 1978; 1985), Vygotsky (1985) and Bruner (1974; 1986) argue that human beings use speech to build up worlds of activities, institutions, relationships and culture as active learners. In Halliday's (1987:9) 'heuristic function the child after he/she has explored him/herself and their immediate environment turn to the exploration of a broader environment and make use of the 'tell me why' function of language. Halliday (1987) states that this function of language is the one that the child uses long before he/she enters formal education and that by the time he/she reaches pre-school education, develops into a whole range of questioning forms.

In relation to questioning, John Holt (1982: 189) suggested that, "we are by nature question-asking, answer-making, problem-solving animals and we are extremely good at it, above all when we are little". Also, Bettelheim (1975:47) highlighted the contribution of myths and fairy tales in children's need for magic and the development of their imagination through these media. Bettelheim (1975) described this process as follows:

"children, like the great philosophers, are searching for the solutions to the first and last questions- 'who am I? How ought I to deal with life's problems? What must I become?'- they do so on the basis of their animistic thinking... As soon as a child begins to move about and explore, he begins to ponder the problem of his identity."

The references above emphasise questioning as a natural force that human beings develop very early in the course of life and take the form of action, including language, and is oriented towards the social and the individual plane. Halliday (1987) and Bakhtin (Dentith, 1995) have seen the child as 'a co-author of the text', that is, two people who 'participate' in the formation of a dialogue and discourse. In education, these two people are usually the

teacher and the student or the teacher and the students in a classroom discourse. Contemporary education in England also appears to recognise the importance of teacher/student questioning in the learning process as demonstrated in the recent government publications of the National Literacy/Numeracy Strategies in Key Stages 1 and 2 (1998) and in the Foundation Stage document for the Early Years (2000). These documents cite that teachers should “promote the use of a broad range of literacy skills to solve problems and encourage pupils to be independent” (Department for Education and Employment, 1998:110) through “modelling..., scaffolding..., questioning to probe pupils’ understanding, to cause them to reflect on and refine their work, and to extend their ideas... (Department for Education and Employment, 1998:8); teacher questions to encourage participation..., meaningful activities..., high expectations..., pace..., pupils contributions... (Department for Education and Employment, 1998:112).

2.6 Language development through questioning

In the whole curriculum, language is therefore an important vehicle for the activation of the above requirements. According to Vygotsky (1978) language is mediated through tools and signs, which motivates further research on the issue of pedagogical ‘tools’ in meaning-making and problem-solving learning environments. The following questions arise: how can language through questioning be explored in the field of Drama in Education, and how can ‘formal’ education benefit from this questioning?

In educational drama the child is viewed in a holistic manner (see Heathcote, 1979; Johnson and O’Neill, 1984) and drama teachers use a type of questioning that enhances the development of thinking and affective skills with the intention to develop the psychomotor domain. As Morgan and Saxton suggest (1994:9) “questions should spring from interest on the part of

the teacher and of the student, and a structure which dictates the process inhibits the natural action of inquiry.”

In order to see how questioning operates in the education of the whole child through drama and therefore to facilitate a similar methodological process at a broader level in education, I will use Bloom and Karthwohl's (1965) taxonomy of educational objectives, Morgan and Saxton's (1994:19) 'Taxonomy of Personal Engagement' and Heathcote's (Gillam, 1988) 'Five layers of meaning'. Bloom and Karthwohl's taxonomy operates at a thinking domain and suggests that the child cannot become an independent learner and questioner unless they become able to value or judge the knowledge for themselves. The language used by teachers' questioning signify the following information (1965:50).

1. **Knowledge of the facts:** recalling, remembering, recognising, recollecting, defining, identifying.
2. **Understanding of the facts (comprehension):** rewording, rephrasing, comparing, explaining, interpreting, describing, illustrating, associating, differentiating. Application of the facts: problem-solving, offering examples, classifying, selecting, transferring, applying, hypothesising, relating.
3. **Analysis and reasoning:** analysing, determining the evidence, drawing conclusions, reasoning logically and critically, inferring, ordering.
4. Finally to be able to put the facts together in such a way that new perspectives are revealed (**Synthesis and evaluation**): integrating, combining, predicting, developing, reflecting, summarising, judging, defending assessing, selecting, prioritising).

Morgan and Saxton (1994) agree with Bruner (1966) that effective learning takes place when students are emotionally engaged with the material (affective domain), when learning springs from curiosity and the need to know. The teaching questions should therefore reveal interest, engagement, commitment, internalisation, interpretation and evaluation.

In the psychomotor/sociomotor domain Heathcote (1988) outlines the teacher's questioning as a simple chart of 'levels of explanation' of human action in drama or in life. Her questioning begins from low awareness and hopes that if the drama process is successful, it will end up on the fifth, final level with the pupil's high awareness. Students and teacher spend most of the drama time in role, and act and respond as someone else. The language in this type of questioning signifies meaningful information that needs to be revealed by the student and is summarised as follows:

Action: Working on pupils' behaviour, the way something is done: 'What are you doing ?'

Motivation: Why someone does it, what he/she wants out of doing it: 'Why are you carrying out this activity?'

Investment: What is at stake that drives them to do it: 'What do you hope to achieve by carrying out this activity?'

Model: Where the behaviour is that of being 'copied' or 'rejected': 'Who or what is your model for this behaviour? How do you know that is appropriate?'

Stance/ Philosophy: What life is about, why life is as it is: 'If you are the kind of person who behaves in this way in these circumstances; what sort of person do you see yourself? What is your philosophy of life?' (Heathcote, in Gilham, 1988)

A combination of the above questioning models will attempt to reveal more information on teaching and learning later in the section on 'Drama as Context' and in the fifth chapter where the 'Mantle of the Expert' strategy will be used to suggest a potential teaching model for language learning in the Early Years.

2.7 The concept of 'self-spectator'

This section will examine the nature of the concept of 'self-spectator' as an educational, methodological device and as a dialogic discourse in the process of reflection-in-action. The term reflection-in-action refers to 'reflection' in learning and teaching that is ongoing as the dramatic event occurs (Shillingford, 1994:3). This section will also explore the relationship between 'self-spectator' as a reflective facility and the development of language in Early Years through Drama in Education.

I will firstly explain the notion of 'self-spectator' in Drama and why it is important in the process of learning. I will then describe the nature of the concept and various ways that illustrate the dialogic discourse of 'self-spectator'. Finally, I will elaborate on how the notion of 'self-spectator' has the potential to develop children's language in the Early Years.

Heathcote (1992a) describes the self-spectator as a form of consciousness, a process of spectating upon oneself while the (dramatic) event is taking place; "This is what I am doing and I realise what I am doing during the process" (Heathcote, 1992a). In a similar way to Boal's (1995) concept of 'the joker' in examining individual and internalised oppressions, Shillingford (1994:16) states that,

"In one sense it can be likened to an internal voice that comments on what is being done and how it is being done. It involves standing outside of the event and seeing the event from a detached viewpoint. In another sense it is the 'outside eye' to watch your work".

O' Toole and Haseman (1986:vii) suggest that one of the main aims of learning through drama is to give young people "the tools of the trade so they can approach drama with the freedom and confidence of understanding - tools that artists and teachers often reserve themselves."

Heathcote (1992a: Tape D-1) is critical of the education system that promotes teacher dependency. One demonstration of this dependency is the conviction that others (usually the teachers) are the only experts in giving, assessing and valuing a piece of work. By reserving this right, the teacher maintains control over the learning process that he/she aims to transmit. She (Heathcote, 1992a: Tape D-1) would therefore argue that the self-spectator function is one of the most valuable tools that students can acquire in order to assess the quality of the work that is done and become responsible for their learning. It stimulates internal dialogue (intra-psychological plane, see: Vygotsky in Wertsch, 1981:163), cultivates a sensitive external dialogue between teacher and pupils based on enquiry (inter-psychological plane, see: Vygotsky in Wertsch, 1981:163), and engages the whole classroom in discourse. The nature of the self-spectator process is therefore educational and methodological for the following reasons:

1. The self-spectator is alerted during the drama process, from within the drama, with the use of conventions such as, a fictitious human or inhuman character (the Old Woman, The Guardian Black Bird) as spectators on the action (Shillingford, 1994). Other conventions are also used such as, depictions (gravestones, standing stones) or figures observing the dramatic process from outside such as teachers, pupils, visitors, parents, the video camera (Heathcote, 1992b: E-series).
2. The use of language alerts consciousness of self. Heathcote upgrades the positive issues that occurred during the process, usually out of the drama. The purpose of the positive use of language is to help children become aware of their actions and the effects of their actions. The use of protective language aims to protect students from identifying with a character or an event and from feeling stared at in ways that work negatively and arouse self-conscious behaviour rather than consciousness of self. (Heathcote, 1992b: Tape E-9).

3. The use of 'alienating', 'estrangement' devices (Brecht, 1961; 1962) to teach 'insight' (Mitter, 1992:44). In Willett (1959: 56), Brecht suggests that, "man's fate is man himself" that is, man's fate is changeable and that theatre is a social instrument that feeds back into the society via the spectators' new found authority (Mitter, 1992:45). Heathcote (1984d: 192) states that,

"drama teaches people by...encouraging critical spectatorship, because art releases the spectator-/action possibility in people. Art can isolate one factor from another, reveal something of infrastructure and give people a no-penalty zone, so that contemplation in flux is possible".

Some Brechtian alienating devices, often used by Heathcote, are isolating images so that students can be stared at (Shillingford, 1994: 23). They stand for interruptions (of drama process) as agents of 'epic' theatre having an alienating effect by disorienting the spectator (Brecht in Mitter, 1992). Heathcote uses text that functions as 'metatext', words and action as agents of the reorientation that makes perspective possible (Brecht in Mitter, 1992: 45). This phenomenon is dialogic as it takes two to create the tussle between text and commentary (actor and spectator in the event). Students are not actors/characters but they take on a role that assumes a 'gesture' and 'gist' (Brecht, 1962) that is, an attitude and point towards a character that the role portrays. These terms, significant in Heathcote's work on self-spectator compound both content and opinion. Students can show what they think of the character (each expresses his/her own view through role) and are invited by the teacher to criticise, as spectators, the character portrayed, not to identify with him. The drama space will be filled with critical discussion (discourse). Brecht (1962: 138) comments: "the metatextual image for the dissociation of actor from role is that of the actor standing between the spectator and the text 'like a quotation'". The teacher will also publicly read

the signs the children make. In a drama pupils are asked to stand as if they are representing gravestones and Heathcote used elevated language to comment on what she sees (Shillingford, 1994). She (Heathcote, 1991a, Tape A-5) explains afterwards to teachers watching:

“ Here stands a stone upon which is written... here the stone stands as if it is sad... is a distancing alienating statement which creates the self-spectator... [the pupil says to him/herself] I know what she is seeing by what she is telling me about myself”.

4. A combination of all three (fictitious human or inhuman characters, positive use of language registers and ‘alienating’ devices).
5. By finding opportunities to control the drama, to show to the children how they can take and keep power over the drama. In one of the dramas she used teacher-in-role and started the drama three times to show the children the tools they can use to manipulate the drama. Each time the students were given a more complicated relationship to deal with (Shillingford, 1994: 24).

The dialogic discourse of self-spectator comes into view through the manifestation of meaning-making in methodology as follows:

1. The use of conventions in the teaching/learning process such as, fictitious characters and depictions, encourage not only artistic tension that leads to students’ creative interest for learning and enquiry but also interactive language and communication at a deeper level. This development of motivation parallel to the development of concepts (awareness of students’ and others’ actions), model use (the critical eye function) and evaluation, supports the conceptions in activity theory (Hedegaard, 1989; Leontiev, 1978) that “motives and concepts are dialectically related” (Moll, 1990:366).

2. Teachers' positive and protective use of language implies that communication as thoughtful consideration has been paid to teacher's/students' active (physically and linguistically) exchange of ideas that may eventually lead to awareness of actions and their effects on others. Vygotsky (Cole et al, 1978:30) places "the most significant moment of intellectual development in the convergence of speech and practical activity". Furthermore, in *Drama in Education* the need for a problem to be resolved or examined, places demands on teachers' meditative language use. Learning is viewed by Heathcote (Shillingford, 1994) as human activity on both interpsychological and intrapsychological levels (see chapter one) as demonstrated by her teaching language style, (Shillingford, 1994) a 'technical and psychological tool' or 'sign' (Wertsch, 1979) that mediate awareness of self.
3. The relationship between text (conversational act) and metatext (teacher's "language of reflections in action") (Heathcote in Grady and O' Sullivan, 1998:5) is dialectical, communicational and interactive: the use of voice, vocabulary, tone, style; the way material is prepared for 'engagement' and lure of students' interest; the change of environment for different kinds of engagement... from within the learning experience. In a way metatext acts as an agent to inform the delivery of concepts and skills through speech (medium) in textual form. Furthermore, this dialectical and interactive language within the fictitious context is 'discourse-making' and motivates pupils' learning. Pupils actively make decisions and construct their own meaning. There is a shift of emphasis from memorisation to higher-order thinking; "the pupil says to him/herself: I know what she (the teacher) is seeing by what she is telling me about myself" (Heathcote, 1991a: Tape A-5); they therefore, internalise control over their own learning. Heathcote (Wagner, 1979) claims that this process of reflection-in-action assists pupils to create meaning and develop understanding about their experiences.

In chapter one, Gee (1999), Kress (1997) Vygotsky (1978), and Bruner (1985; 1986) argue that the individual must be active and constructive to develop his/her understanding of the world. Vygotsky (1985b) in particular, focuses on the forms of teacher-child interpsychological functioning (discourse) rather than on the child's intrapsychological functioning alone. He (Newman and Holzman, 1993; 132) believed that the development of speech consists of movement of thought to word in an external auditory plane of speech and in the inner or semantic plane of speech. Newman and Holzman (1993:132) interpret Vygotsky's thinking on this necessary process for language development:

"In the auditory plane, the movement is from the part to the whole, from word to sentence... In the semantic plane, the movement is from sentence to word; the child begins with the whole - a whole phrase, semantically, even if a single 'word' auditorally - and moves to mastery of particular units of meaning, separate words. In their complex relationship to each other, these two planes form the unity of speech. And this unity both reflects and restructures the relationship of speech to thought".

Guss (2000:283) discusses how the 'aesthetic-reflexive dimension' in Early Years play and Drama meets children's communicational needs in adapting their practice to meet the practice of their co-performers:

"Children can change play styles, given aesthetic and artistic enrichment. Aesthetic experiences with other children in the play-cultural arena, adult-led collective drama processes, as well as spectating theatre, give children formal models and conventions which often come into play in their play-drama.

This experience is of incomparable value for the child in child-cultural, aesthetic communication”.

Kress (1997) highlights various ways that children invent languages to suit their needs of play, Halliday (1975;1978) describes functions in phases of children’s development, including language, where through ‘play’ children ‘signify’, make sense of the world and construct reality. Vygotsky (1976: 553) showed that in play the participants attend to the meaning of their actions and are reflecting as they actively construct their imaginary world. Through play the child develops powers of meta-cognition as he/she “learns to recognise consciously his own actions”. Bruner (1983) suggests that in a child’s interactions with an adult, communication through playful activities create intersubjectivity (mutual attention and commonality), important factors for the child’s self-recognition, achievements and further developments.

The power of Drama lies in its ability to construct meaning by recreating our experiences in isolation and safety from real life consequences, and participants are active and constructive in this process (Shillingford, 1994). Heathcote (1984b: 130) states that,

“Play makes constructs of reality which are then available for examination by the spactator which exists in each participant; that part of us which observes what we are doing”.

2.7.1 The concept of self-spectator and progression in Drama

Addressing the last inquiry of this section, I will compare two models: ‘The framework for progression in drama through Heathcote’s four levels of the self-spectator construct’ as developed by Shillingford (1994:26), and ‘the progression of pupils’ genesis of performance capacity through the zone of proximal development’ as developed from Tharp and Gallimore’s (1988: 35) research on various means of assisting performance in structuring

educational situations. Although these strategies have not been designed to assist the performance of children in Early Years settings as such, they both assist progression in educational terms and their comparison will attempt to examine whether the 'self-spectator' construct can facilitate children's learning in Early Years. In Early Years education the concept of 'self' is central in implementing the demands of the National Curriculum (2000) and the Early Learning Goals at a foundation stage (1999). A comparison between Tharp and Gallimore's (1988: 35) model for pupils' performance in school settings and Shillingford's (1994: 26) framework for pupils' progression of self-spectator in drama may highlight methodological elements to incorporate in structuring learning environments for Early Years children through drama with the concept of 'self' as a key issue in language development. This will assist the development of a model for teaching/learning language in Early Years through Drama which is explicated in the following chapters.

I view Heathcote's (Shillingford, 1994) construct of 'self-spectator' as a crucial concept in teaching/learning settings, particularly when so much emphasis has been placed by the National Curriculum on children's independence in learning. This 'self-distance' is necessary not only to acting, artistic, drama and public life but also to the concept of 'discourse-making' as explored throughout the thesis.

Figure 4:

Level	Facilitator Position	Sign Generated	Self Spectator	Realisation	Purpose/goal	Feedback
Level I Often termed "improvisation".	To induct, protect, disarm, and engage.	Mainly to be read and to create resonance and affective learning.	Beguiled away from resistance to experience.	At interest attraction.	often pre-meditated by facilitator.	security, interest, pleasure and protection.
Level II Improvisation now a more apt term	To energise to drive towards, and to make demands and stretch.	To place pressure, to support and challenge and take some risks, some deliberate role reversal re: power to influence	To accept challenges, take risks and to volunteer and "see" tools and to put them to use in process, test results.	Seeing "how it works", examine results in process, recognise how tools have operated, initiate not just respond.	starting to have opinions, make choices, validate input and the positive/negative product.	meeting challenges, interest in skills, reviewing, mediating and meditating.
Level III Towards art and channels a conscious endeavour.	Now becomes audience, foil, critic, mentor and collaborator.	Facilitator now 'reads' signs and responds rather than is sole creator of sign, feeds back interpretation.	Watches the intention "forming" process, assesses tools in use, accepts struggle and process, energises.	Checking form related with ideation- accepts change of viewpoint, discards, redirects, reformulates, accepts ambiguity.	finding more tools, exploring forms, shaping and considering audiences.	critical spectator honing language to consider products.
Level IV Art form theatre	serves needs, supports energy, considers wider audience of theatre.	Precision, clarity of statement, team work a priority.	Stringent "forming" interests and self discipline.	Medium now related to message.	to communication, challenge, stimulate, respect material/audience	interrogation of product, mode, style and see "forward".

Shillingford's (1994:26) framework for the progression in drama through Heathcote's four levels showing the centrality of the self-spectator construct.

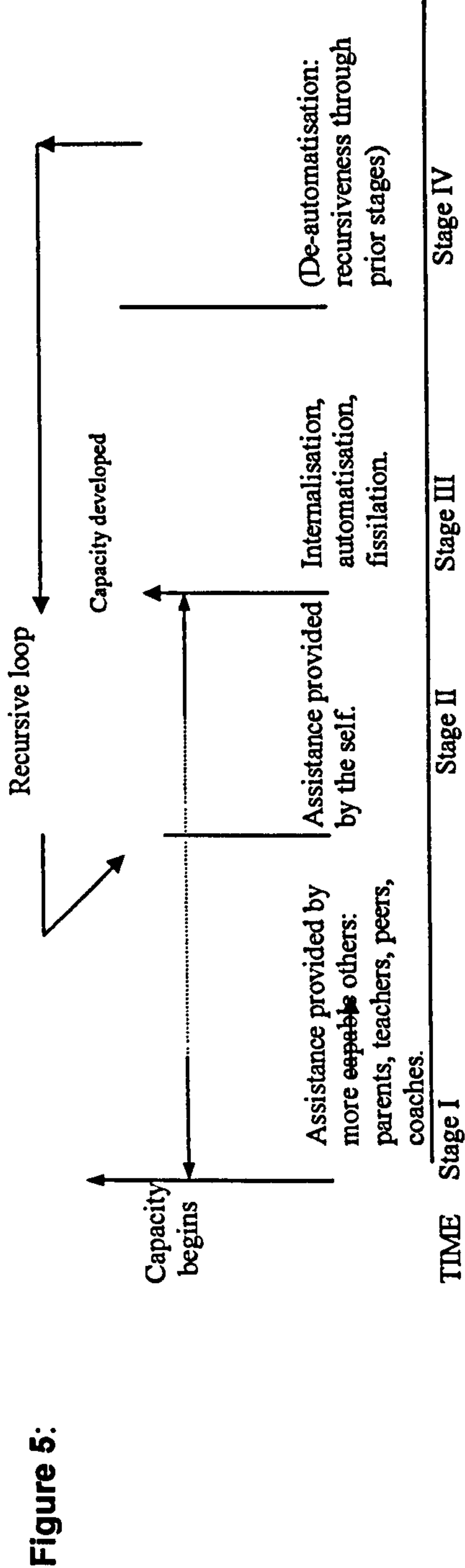


Figure 5:

Tharp & Gallimore (1988:35) Genesis of a performance capacity: progression through the zone of proximal development.

2.7.2 Stage 1

In Stage/Level One in both models, the role of the adult(s) is of paramount importance. Intersubjectivity (Saxe et al., 1984:29) is the field of knowledge in which both child and adult should operate in order for any learning to take place. In Tharp and Gallimore's model, understanding by the adult of the child's realisations and the historical achievements of culture as communicated by the mother are the main principles for the child's conception and performance of any task goal. During this stage, the adult chooses activities that will engage the child and carefully selects the tasks, appropriate tools and materials to perform the activity with the child and assist his/her performance. The child who was a spectator will become a participant (see: Bruner, 1983:60) if the "transit from other-regulation to self-regulation" begins (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:35).

Tharp and Gallimore (1988:35) state:

"The transit begins while performance is still being carried out on the interpsychological plane of functioning, because the child can begin to use language exchanges with the adult to engender assistance".

This assistance of performance that simplifies the task for the child by means of graduated assistance by the adult/expert is described by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) as 'scaffolding'. When the learner has taken control over his/her learning by asking questions, adopting other sub-routines of the adult's assistance and performing the task itself, then the task of Stage One is accomplished and the learner can independently assist him/herself.

The adult/teacher/instructor uses as "means of assisting performance" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:44) in the Zone of Proximal Development, the following methods:

1. **Modelling:** a powerful process of offering behaviour for imitation such as the development of language through imitation (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Bandura, 1977; Rogoff, 1986).
2. **Contingency management:** rewards and punishments are arranged to follow on behaviour, depending on whether or not the behaviour is desired. In effective teaching, it is focused mainly on positive behaviour and positive rewards but the process cannot originate new behaviours (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Bandura, 1969; Tharp and Wetzel, 1969).
3. **Feeding-back information on performance as an effective means of self-assistance and self-regulation** (see: Tharp, Gallimore and Calkins, 1984; Watson and Tharp, 1985).
4. **Instructing:** it is a linguistic form of assisting performance and occurs when teachers assume responsibility for it rather than expecting pupils to learn on their own. It usually takes the form of assigning tasks or in order for the pupils to answer a question by performing the strategic tasks of the instruction (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:57).
5. **Questioning:** a dialectical method for instruction. A powerful means of assistance when it is on a level that lies beyond the surface but not often used in schools as such (see Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:57-62).
6. **Cognitive structuring:** the provision of a structure for thinking and acting. An organising structure that evaluates, groups, and sequences perception, memory and action. It is an interpersonal process of guided reinvention in which the teacher assists the children to develop cognitive structures through mutual participation. Before the teacher makes use of any names, terms or concepts that they are going to work on, they assist them with questioning and feedback. When she/he judges that they have reached the point in the ZPD, then she announces the definitions. (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:63-67; Feldman, 1980).

2.7.3 Stages 2, 3 and 4

In Stage 2, although the performance is not fully developed or automatised, a child carries out a task without assistance from others. Tharp and Gallimore (1988:37) state that, "during this stage the relationships between language, thought and action in general undergo profound rearrangements - ontogenetically, in the years from infancy through middle childhood".

In Stage 3 the child has emerged from the ZPD into the developmental stage of that task. Internalisation has taken place and 'automatisation' of action is performed (see: Tharp and Gallimore, 1988:38).

Stage 4 is a mix of other-regulated assistance to self-regulated and automatised processes for enhancement, improvement and maintenance of performance.

Heathcote's drama teacher in Shillingford's (1994) model performs similar tasks, yet in two Levels of progression. The extent of work may take place in two Levels and not in one, for various reasons such as, Heathcote who performs the model is not a full-time teacher and works with different groups of children at a time. Moreover, using drama as a tool to perform learning about self, the world and the art form of Theatre is a more complicated and thorough process than performing the construction of a puzzle. Heathcote (Shillingford, 1994) does not make use of rewards, positive encouragement and acclamations (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) as teaching tools but changes the facilitator's stance to match the signs, children's self-spectator, their realisation, the goal and the feedback.

I will deal with Levels 1 and 2 as one level because if the model was performed by a trained class teacher, some qualities of Level 1 might have

taken place at initial meetings between the class teacher and the pupils. Whilst Level 1 contains dramatic elements, Level 2 is more dramatic with improvisation and experiential drama through interaction between teacher and pupils. A form of independence can be developed in Level 3 where the child can observe his and others' actions, can perform critical thinking, collaborate and assist others. In Level 4 a child can consciously use the signs to generate meaning and perform understanding in front of others (audience) with confidence.

The facilitator responds to the needs of the class. At first, he/she will build a bond with the children, will observe more at this stage the children's existing quality of self-spectator and then try to stretch them at their own level so that they can begin to participate in the drama work. Activities will contain dramatic elements and will be planned to engage the children with the dramatic material, to focus attention, to create a positive atmosphere and a will for learning, interest, desire and commitment. The teacher's responsibility to continuously observe the pupils' stance increases as the process moves throughout the Levels. This usually happens in relation to pupils' engagement with the task, the negative or positive quality of the self-spectator (productive or non-productive in terms of realising the drama process), as well as any process of critical thinking during reflection-in-action. According to Heathcote and Shillingford (1994) learning in drama can not take place if the self-spectator is resistant to the experience. This raises the question: why should it therefore take place in the National Curriculum?

Some characteristics of children's behaviour at Stage 1 are withdrawal, shyness or fear of taking risks, apathy, disinterest, boredom or the opposite, rushing, showing off, teacher dependence due to lack of confidence, and lack of necessary skills. Children will start taking some risks in Level 2

(Shillingford, 1994: 30). Teachers who work in Early Years settings may feel familiar with these descriptions. Meanwhile, this kind of behaviour does not only describe pupils new to drama procedures only but also anyone, an adult or a child, who may enter into an unfamiliar experience for a first time (see Goffman, 1974).

The sign -systems used by the teacher (through language, clothes, body language, props, etc.) are placed there to be 'read' by the students and help create resonance and develop affective learning. Sign-systems have been selected and placed carefully and in Level 1, no demand is made by the teacher to make students alter or interact with the sign. In Level 2, teacher and student will work together towards an unknown outcome. The teacher will take some risks to do this and will also place some pressure on students to do the same but will support them in these risks to minimise failure. The self-spectator's condition in relation to these pressures will structure the drama work. If the self-spectator is positive then, in Level 3 the facilitator will draw attention to the children's creation of signs and will respond to these. By Level 4 the teacher's role is to direct the students towards clarity of their own signing because now they are self-disciplined and can tolerate stringent forming interests (Shillingford: 1994: 34-35).

Realisation is the teacher's expectations in relation to children's self-spectator as an end product of each stage according to the strategies and interventions used (see teacher's expectation at each Level in Shillingford's framework, (see Figure 4).

The **purpose/goal** of the work is pre-planned and mediated by the teacher only at Level One. In the next two levels the students' needs and responses will decide the purpose and the strategies and by Level 4, it is hoped that negotiation strategies will provide opportunities for the students to find the purpose of the work and set their own goals.

Feedback is similar to Tharp and Gallimore's 'feeding-back' information on performance means (1984) and provides a structure for thinking and acting (see Tharp and Gallimore, 1988: 63-67). It is verbal or non-verbal commentary on the work that is being achieved at each stage.

The parallelism between the two frameworks show that they both come from a similar perspective and the teacher's structuring thinking operates in response to the child's needs. It is more obvious that Heathcote's model can operate within large groups; however, it is not convincing that, the results that Tharp and Gallimore's model promises can be reached in working with groups of thirty children in a classroom context. The use of Drama in Heathcote's model may be more effective in working with young children. This is because very young children can perform to the maximum of their abilities through play therefore structured teaching using Drama as tool or methodology is a powerful way to meet the child's needs, expectations and experiences. The self-spectator structure may well operate in Early Years when psychological and social changes in relation to self still take place, and self is a key issue for all learning developments that take place during these years.

The schema below (**Figure 6**) extends the comparative account of the socio-cultural theories of language and makes connections between discourse-making and Drama in Education.

Figure 6: Discourse-making and meaning in language

Discourse-making (Describes children as makers of meaning). Describes the sociocultural character of language.	Halliday (Focuses on child-parent relationship: the child and another exchange meanings in a context of cultural interaction (initiation and response). Detailed analysis of children's learning development of language but focused on parental interactions.	Vygotsky (Meaning is 'mediated' through formal instruction, ZOPD, provided by an adult or more capable peers) Emphasised on learning through imaginative experience but did not describe the extent to which children engage in fictitious contexts.	Bruner (Less emphasis on meaning-making. The inter-subjective environment is the pre-requisite for communication and any learning that takes place). Similar to Halliday's views about parental relationships: playful modes of learning such as mother-child successful relationship can create successful learning.	Drama in Education It incorporates elements from all previous theories; in addition it appears to form the praxis for contextualised discourse-making in teaching and learning.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children are makers of signs which they use for the expression of their meaning. 2. Speech is language-in-action and is used in a motivated manner in the representation and communication of meaning. 3. Children build 'realities' (discourse-making) through tools and objects (painting, drawing, symbolism and role play). 4. Words are materials out of which one can fashion new signs; and these new signs express our meanings. 5. Culture 6. Negotiating and regulating inter-personal behaviours in public rather than domestic contexts. 7. Developing social, moral, spiritual and affective personalities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language is the encoding of a 'behavioural potential' into a 'meaningful potential'; what humans 'can do' in interaction by turning it into what they 'can mean'. What they 'can mean' (the semantic system) is encoded into what they 'can say' (lexicogrammatical system). 2. Through language (activity and narrative associated with culture) the child learns a system of meaningful behaviour, a semiotic system. 3. Meaning is actualised in particular situations (contexts of the situation). 4. Meaning develops in the 'ideational' function of language where the child's expression of meaning in language involves both reflection on and interaction with the social system. 5. Play is the functional use of language. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Objects referring to words signify meaning e.g. the stick becomes a 'pivot' for the transference of meaning. 2. Through language the child transforms his/her environment to create meaning. 3. In play 'action' is subordinated to meaning. 4. Play is a revolutionary (transformational) function of language. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children master language when they become capable to 'refer' and to 'mean'. 2. 'Play' as a medium for communication can facilitate learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of signs, metaphors and analogies in narrative create the context for communication between people in particular fictitious situations. 2. The teacher as a 'mediator' in children's learning experiences may shape children's ability to interpret and act upon the world (ZOPD and scaffolding) 3. A variety of language registers are used by the teacher (in and out of role) to signify and engage pupils with the content of learning (see also Halliday and Vygotsky). 4. Teacher's questioning signifies meaningful information to be revealed by the pupils. 5. The self-spectator construct as a form of reflection-in action process (spectating upon oneself during the dramatic event) has the potential to develop discourse-making (see also ZOPD and scaffolding).

Chapter Three

The socio-historical context of Early Years education

3.1 Introduction

In the first chapter I examined four social theories of language which demonstrated that children's language is discourse, 'a serious talk' (Carter, 1995), and has social and cultural character (Bakhtin, 1986; Voloshinov, 1973; Gee, 1999; Kress, 1997; Halliday, 1975, 1978, 1985; Wertsch, 1985; Boguslavsky, 1975; Cole, 1978; Habermas, 1984; Holzman and Newman, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Mead, 1934; Saussure, 1983; Leontiev and Luria, 1968; Bruner, 1986, 1974, 1975, 1983). According to these theories, in the pedagogical domain, children's interaction with the world is their struggle to make sense of the world, its culture and history, and communicate intrapersonal experiences and understandings about the world interpersonally. These social and communicative factors drive children's speech towards the skilled behaviour of problem-solving. Speech is verbal and non-verbal and words communicate personal and social meanings in interaction with 'another' (Kress, 1997; Bakhtin, 1986; Halliday, 1978). Talk can be monologic or dialogic, interactive in 'here and now' shared situations or socially independent contexts and play can be a personal and social learning experience for children (Kress, 1997). Play contains forms of text, what the individual 'can do', 'can mean' and 'can say' through language 'in use' and 'language in action'. The context of the situation such as in play, is the medium through which the text lives and breathes (Halliday, 1985). Instruction as teaching process and the use of tools and objects as pivots revealed a holistic approach to children's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, in educational terms, learning and language learning should be a 'scaffolding' process that happens as an exploratory activity between adults (teachers) and children in structured, interactive and playful settings (Bruner, 1974, 1975, 1983, 1986).

The centrality of social context in meaningful learning is also demonstrated in the second chapter where language is regarded as text through the development of children's unstructured play to structured forms of Drama. In Theatre, as in educational Drama, the context of meaning-making is the 'cultural space' where the meaning is immediate, self-consciously realised, material frame for all the social interactions and personal interpretations (Brook,1993). Brook (1993:82) expresses the view that meaning in Theatre is the realisation from each individual of his own secret world in a unified and shared experience:

"the story or the theme provides the common ground, the potential field in which each member of the audience, whatever his age or his background, can find himself united with his neighbour in a shared experience".

The story or the theme in Drama in Education is a form of practical activity and has the potential to be a shared cultural experience through the medium of conventions. Neelands (1992:4) cites that,

"Drama is a way in which the young become initiated into the values, traditions and identity of their society".

Drama in Education describes aspects of human existence through stories-in-action and offers validity to every living form when young people express their own experiences and their personal and societal concepts such as family, relationships, justice (Neelands,1992). Theatre and Drama use many forms or languages such as body language, sound language, colour language, costume language, scenery language, lighting language that operate beyond words, through which communication is established and maintained with the audience (Brook, 1993). Furthermore, Culture, Language and Drama are social domains

which are mutually fed by modes of 'knowing' as well as modes of aesthetic experiencing because Drama reflects, through the medium of language, our social and cultural lives (Best, 1992; Boal, 1995; Brecht, 1961, 1962; 1984; Brook, 1976, 1968, 1993; Langer, 1953). Moreover, the textual, cultural and educational elements of Drama, theme, narrative and meaning-making make the art form of Drama a pedagogical tool for children's language development (Egan, 1986, 1988; Booth, 1994; Neelands, 1987, 1992). In Drama in Education the thematic approach sets up shared experiences for pupils and teachers as well as meaningful contexts for learning. The teacher uses the dramatic convention of the role and employs language registers to signify and communicate at an intersubjective level the meaning of discourse. That is, he/she uses 'signs' which can be read by the class, interprets the children's symbolic language, questions during the process, establishes the fictional context, time and space for meaningful learning to take place, creates productive tension, engages pupils with learning and creates the appropriate atmosphere in the classroom (O' Neill and Lambert, 1982; Wagner, 1979; Morgan and Saxton, 1994; Neelands, 1984). Consequently, the theory and practice of Drama in Education views language teaching and learning as two phenomena that occur in social and cultural contexts. Meaningful language teaching through Drama aims to develop the child's critical awareness (self-spectator) of how knowledge and linguistic practices are shaped by, and shape, social relationships and relationships of power (Shillingford, 1993; Clark et al., 1990).

3.2 Understanding the new Early Years Curriculum

The purpose of this thesis, to suggest a model for language teaching in Early Years, serves to motivate a comparative study in chapter four which aims to

establish similarities and differences based on an understanding of the different social, political and cultural contexts in which the various existing models were produced. This chapter however explores the socio-historical context of Early Years education since the seventeenth century and traces its origins in the traditions of psychology and psychoanalysis on language development, parenting and human behaviour (Freud:1905, 1938, 1927,1946, 1953, 1970, 1977; Piaget: 1929, 1959; Bowlby: 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1969, 1982, 1973). Through a comprehensive literature review, my aim is to examine individual and collective historical and social situations through which the contemporary Early Years educational practice came into effect. One such social issue that contemporary educationalists face is “the problem of meaning”; as Fullan (1991:4) describes it, a key to understanding what educational change is for, what it is and how it proceeds. The effect of educational change and its relation to socio-historical background is an important issue that needs to be examined in this thesis in order to develop a working model for language development in Early Years (see chapter five).

3.2.1 A brief historical review of education since the seventeenth century

Significant stages in the history of education tend to view cultural history as a causal sequence. Certain things are discovered, invented, or made possible as a result of prior things having been discovered, invented or made possible (see Burke, 1978; Gombrich, 1967). Fullan (1991:5) in his analysis of understanding educational change, views the decade of the 1960s as the cornerstone of this process and calls it an “adoption phase”. He (Fullan, 1991:5) uses this term to describe “innovations of the day (in terms of quantity not quality) that were being taken on, or adopted as a mark of progress”. However, Fullan’s term may also

summarise a series of developmental events that took place between the eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century. These influenced the pedagogical philosophy and questioned the learning process, the role of the learner, the teacher and much more recently (around 1960), the educational context. Moreover in education, the period from the romantic pedagogues (eighteenth century) and the development of cognitive psychology (nineteenth century) to Darwin's theory of evolution and the origin of species in the closing decades of the nineteenth century has been described by Dewey (1938) as the passageway from 'traditional' to 'progressive' education. It also expresses the transition of scientific thinking from medieval religious mysticism and absolutism which intermingled science and philosophy to rationalism and scientific observation based on facts. Up until the sixteenth century,

“science was the means to reveal God's creation... what our physical senses could collect as evidence was the truth, and therefore existed... scientific activities were motivated by irrational sources” (Silver, 1998:103).

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had constituted the age of absolutism and are characterised by rationalistic thinking and empirical methods of observation in the field of science. The political problem had been largely that of internal order, and political theory had been presented in the language of national sovereignty. The Renaissance political philosophies of Machiavelli, Bodin, and Hobbes had centred on the absolute power of kings and rulers. The philosophers Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz criticised medievalism and they bound up new tendencies in philosophy with social and pedagogic changes (Silver, 1998). On one hand, Bacon believed that the use of inductive and empirical methods would bring the knowledge that would give man strength and make possible a

reorganisation of society. Therefore, he demanded that schools should be scientific workplaces in the service of life, that they should put the exact sciences before logic and rhetoric, that schools were narrow in thought and that the teachers of his day could offer nothing but words.

On the other hand, Descartes did not proceed from empirical experience as for him the only permanence and certainty lay in human reason or thinking ('cogito ergo sum', 'I think, therefore, I am'). For Descartes, the ability to think makes doubt and critical evaluation of the environment possible and recognises only reason (ratio) as truth. Thus, education must be concerned with the development of critical rationality. Egan (1988:17) comments on this period thus:

"Childhood, as a subject of concerned attention, fared little better from Enlightenment...Rational thought was what distinguished humanity, and rational thought emerged slowly through an arduous process of education. The fantasy of childhood was a confusing froth to be blown away from the infancy of mind in order that rationality can begin to be formed".

Like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz also outlined rationalistic philosophic systems. Decisive for educational theory was their statement that knowledge and experience originate in thinking (not in sense impressions, which can provide examples and individual facts) and that formal thinking categories should form the substance of education. For them, the aim of education should be the mastery of thinking and judgement rather than the mere assimilation of facts. Thus, the separation of the human nature and the emphasis on the works of the mind as opposed to the works of fantasy related to senses, emotions and subjectivity, may have begun then.

In the European educational theory of the seventeenth century the leading philosophy of Comenius (1901), both humanitarian and universalistic, argued that,

“ the whole of the human race may become educated, men of all ages, all conditions, both sexes and all nations”.

Comenius' (1647) spiritual values and religious beliefs and his methodology for the arts and the sciences provided a balance between the emphasis placed upon the rationalistic thinking and in opposition to sense impressions, individualism and subjectivism. He (Comenius, 1647) believed that everything should be presented to the child's senses, and to as many senses as possible, using pictures, models, workshops, music, and other 'objective' means. With proper presentation, the mind of the child could become a 'psychological' counterpart of the world of nature. As Mellor (1950:5) states, “it was not until two hundred and forty years had elapsed that his ideas was put into practice in England”.

3.2.2 The Enlightenment period and the romantic view

Outside of the theory of knowledge, the most significant contribution of the Enlightenment came in the field of social and political philosophy, as Locke (1690) and Rousseau (in Babbitt, 1919) proposed a justification of political association grounded in the newer political requirements of the age. The Enlightenment theories of Locke and Rousseau turned to the freedom and equality of citizens. It was a natural historical transformation. The eighteenth century was the age of the democratic revolutions (including the French Revolution), the political problem was that of freedom and the revolt against injustice, and political theory was expressed in the idiom of natural and inalienable rights. Locke's political theory (1690) was an express denial of the

divine right of kings and the absolute power of the sovereign. He thus stated one of the fundamental principles of the liberal tradition: that there can be no subjection to power without consent, although once political society has been founded, there is an obligation to submit to the decisions of the majority. It is the legislature that makes these decisions, although the ultimate power of choosing the legislature rests with the people, and even the powers of the legislature are not absolute, because the laws of nature remain as a permanent standard and as principles of protection against any arbitrary authority. Locke's (1690) political views are also reflected in his ideas about education in which the ultimate power for knowledge falls on teachers.

But most of his philosophical work was around the concept of 'innate ideas'. Locke's (1690) view that human knowledge and morals originate from experience being acquired through the senses, made him one of the first representatives of empiricist philosophy. One aspect of this view, which is still reflected in our contemporary educational systems with particular reference to Early Years, was the concept of people being born as 'tabula rasa': a blank slate, which was gradually filled in with knowledge and morals. Locke's individualistic views contributed to the foundations of capitalism.

Rousseau's (in Babbitt, 1919) more radical political doctrines built upon Lockean foundations although his conception of citizenship was much more organic and much less individualistic than Locke's. For Rousseau (in Babbitt, 1919) the state is a moral person whose life is the union of its members, whose laws are acts of the general will, and whose end is the liberty and equality of the citizens. Rousseau was intrigued by the elusive ideal of naturalism. He argued that good education should develop the nature of man. *Emile* (1762), his major work on education, describes an attempt to educate a simple and pure natural child for life

in a world from which social man is estranged. Rousseau (in Babbitt, 1919:58) had said, "leave childhood to ripen in your children". In a similar context, talking about the aim of education Plato (1941: 68) had said, "the beginning as you know, is always the most important part. In support Egan (1988:1) notes that,

"Rousseau in Emile, complemented Plato's conception of education as an intellectual journey towards clarity of vision, accumulated knowledge, and civic responsibility, by arguing that each of the stages on the journey had a quality of its own that merited attention in its own right. Childhood and adolescence are not merely imperfect forms of adulthood, they have their own perfection, and a proper education must attend to their cultivation".

Egan's (1988) interpretation elucidates the influence that both Plato (1941) and Rousseau's (in Babbitt, 1919) arguments had on Western thinking about education providing the terms and the polarities of the major educational debates of this century. Some of these are revealed in the educational philosophy of the twentieth century by Dewey (1938) when he argued about the transition from traditional to progressive education stating that,

" Mankind likes to think in terms of opposites... of either-ors... between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without. The traditional scheme is, in essence, one of imposition from above and from outside as opposed to the progressive one that is, expression and cultivation of individuality...".

The most powerful Romantic reaction to this view of childhood might have been expected to draw attention to children's fantasy. Instead, Rousseau (1911:77)

and Plato consider fairy-tales and fantasy generally as more words which will convey intellectual confusion and moral chaos: "Men may be taught by fables; children require the naked truth". Indeed, the fountainhead of 'progressive' educational ideas, Rousseau (in Babbitt, 1919:56) who quotes Plato states that, "the child should be taught by experience alone".

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represent a period of great activity in reformulating educational principles, and there was a ferment of new ideas, some of which in time wrought a transformation in school and classroom. Out of immigration, urbanisation, and industrialisation in the second half of the nineteenth century came the philosophy of pragmatism (Ianni and Storey, 1973). This period is also characterised by the development of the purpose of education which can be broadly divided in two conceptual areas: that education should serve the needs of the individual and second, that it should serve the needs of society (Avis et al, 1991). Rousseauist ideas as well as Marx and Engels' writings (1867-94; 1938; 1848) about the alienation and dehumanisation of man caused by what they saw as the exploitative forces of capitalism had a profound impact on educational developments of this period in history. In Marx's view, what was needed for man's growth toward maturity was genuine community; that is, the voluntary drawing together of autonomous and socially responsible persons. The model of the educated person that Marx put forward was not the individualist (Lockean view) nor the coerced collectivist but the accountable communal man, who attained his freedom not by fleeing from social relationship but through social relationships. Individual freedom required social authority (Avis et al, 1991).

Rousseau's ideas influenced various educational reformers and their curriculum plans in the 20th century such as Pestalozzi, Herbart, Froebel and Owen. Their

principles developed areas such as child education, the importance of early education, sense-perception, the urge to learn, play, language development and the whole child (Egan and Nadaner, 1988).

Pestalozzi believed in the child's capacity to learn for himself through living 'according to Nature'. His fundamental principle was 'Life educates', and he tried to act upon this principle in the Swiss orphanages and schools in which he worked. Pestallozi (in Lindon, 2001: 58) in one of his letters, written in 1818, said that,

“ we must bear in mind that the ultimate end of education is, not perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life... Thus education, instead of merely considering what is to be imparted to children, ought to consider first what they may be said already to possess, if not as developed, at least as an innate, faculty capable of development”.

Herbart's theory of education (1892) is a philosophy of mind and reflects Pestalozzi's ideas on teaching. He regarded 'ideas' as mental forces expressed in mathematical formulas and which need not be conscious. On this basis Herbart developed a theory of education as a branch of applied psychology and advocated formal teaching (1892). Herbart's ideas on the development of pedagogy as a science influenced the cognitive developmental approaches. As a result, school subjects during the period up to 1900 were seen as a medium by which educational powers could be enhanced. This became known as 'mental' or 'formal' discipline and enshrined the notion that certain subjects provided training in desired mental activities, or 'faculties', and the effects of these mental exercises were general: the three R's prevailed, the methods of teaching involved group chanting and drill and exercises for the senses (Child in Entwistle, 1985).

Pestalozzi's idea (in Lindon, 2001) about how the acquisition of language and of mathematical knowledge is largely dependent upon sensory experiences, influenced Froebel (Kilpatrick, 1916) who stresses the importance of sensory impressions in the development of speech. His most important contribution to educational theory was his belief in 'self-activity' and play as essential factors in child education. It was Froebel (Kilpatrick, 1916) who first identified that there was an inner significance for the child in play, and that it was a serious matter, to be treated with respect. Froebel (in Kilpatrick, 1916:54) said that,

“ play is the highest phase of child development... the purest, most spiritual, activity of man at this stage, and at the same time, typical of human life as a whole... A child that plays thoroughly, with self-active determination, perseveringly until physical fatigue forbids, will surely be a thorough, determined man, capable of self-sacrifice for the promotion of welfare of himself and others”.

Froebel (in Lindon, 2001) believed that the young child learned best not through formal instruction but through play and imitation. Similar views about the significance of play in language development have been explored in chapter one.

Philosophies of play developed in child education two centuries ago still shape contemporary Early Years Curricula. An example of Froebel's influence can be identified in the training support framework for the England and Wales Foundation stage (2001: 16) in which it is stated that,

“ play is the most effective way for children to use new learning... play helps children to move from the here and now in their thinking into both the past and the future. It can help children to think flexibly and at a high level”.

Froebel (in Lindon, 2001) saw early childhood development as a special phase during which the child expresses himself through play. Child's play was a process of discovery and recognition that educated the child to the unity, as well as the diversity, of things in nature. Echoes of these educational premises guide the development of early childhood centres for the education of the young child in this century. Thus the proliferation of nursery schools and other institutions of pre-school education in the twentieth century can be traced to a number of developments.

3.2.3 The cognitive view

A new scientific interest in early childhood education resulted from applications in the fields of psychology, biology, medicine, psychiatry and education. From the turn of the century to the present time Child (1985) detects shifts of emphasis forming a gradual accumulation of concerns in educational psychology. One of the reasons for the change of direction at the turn of the twentieth century, from the romantic - naturalistic to cognitive view based more on the development of the mind, was Darwin's theory of evolution and the development of the species; the second was the increased significance attached to scientific method especially applied to animal and human behaviour. The lasting and the wide-ranging effects of these two factors were quite crucial in changing the philosophy of teaching alongside the growing reality of compulsory education for all (Desmond and Moore, 1991).

The major implication of Darwin's work for psychology was the importance which became attached to, firstly, the notion of progression from animal to human and within humans from birth to death, and secondly, the interaction between the animate and the inanimate, that is, between animal and environment, in the

process of survival (Child, 1985). Also the study of transitions, both physical and mental, from childhood to adulthood became popular, reversing the Victorian notion of children as homunculi (Child, 1985). Darwin himself was deeply interested in this subject and kept careful diaries of children's development.

Another influence arising from the notion of compatibility between inherent characteristics and environmental circumstances (Desmond and Moore, 1991) gave encouragement to three kinds of development in psychology. The study of inherent characteristics of 'internal factors' gave birth to instinct and need theories which became fashionable in educational psychology during the first half of the twentieth century and developed theories of motivation and self-actualisation (see Maslow, 1959; 1966). Freudian psychoanalysis was also influenced by this aspect of Darwin's theory which gave rise to psychological issues about the child's needs in Early Years. Relevant educational models developed and were practised as products of social philosophy such as Dewey's (1956;1963;1966). Thus Dewey (1966:184) claimed that,

"The knowledge which comes first to persons, and that remains mostly deeply ingrained, is knowledge of how to do; how to walk, talk, read, write, skate, ride a bicycle, and so on indefinitely".

Activity-based and self-chosen purposeful learning were some of Dewey's principles of early childhood education. Dewey was not a cognitivist. However, reference to his principles here takes place for two reasons: firstly, because his pedagogy and its practical application was influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, and secondly the period during which he developed his ideas coincides chronologically with cognitivist developments in psychology. Similar to Dewey's principles, it is suggested in the current Early Years document (2000:11) that:

“there should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves”.

Finally, in the twentieth century the use of science and the possibilities of scientific control encouraged the rapid growth of studies, particularly in child development. External or environmental circumstances as sources of systematic study were espoused by behaviourists from the beginning of this century (Kuhn, 1970). The scientific study of those attributes which enabled humans to survive, particularly intellectual attributes, inevitably led educational psychologists to search for those qualities which might influence the motivation and academic performance of children. The functionalist view generated by Darwinism inspired the search for human capacities which correlated with success and gave rise to the mental testing movement (see Binet's intelligence tests, 1904). Most empirical research programmes into children's cognition tended to ignore children's fantasy (Egan and Nadaner, 1988). Even Piaget's (1951) observation of Early Years children's thinking focused almost exclusively on a set of logico-mathematical operations. For Piaget (Maier, 1969:97) play and language are cognitive processes and products of mental activity. Language, like play, emerges as part of the continuum of intellectual development. His views on language influenced the structuralism movement in the 1960s which he developed together with the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure, Noam Chomsky and the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. Piaget also influenced psychological research and early education in Britain and world-wide although he claimed that the child under the age of seven is in many ways extremely limited in his ability to think and reason (Donaldson, 1987).

3.2.4 The Social Constructivist view

Whilst the history of early years education research lies mainly in the field of developmental psychology, since 1990 research carried out by Universities and Colleges of Higher Education places greater emphasis on issues of interaction and meaning-making in early childhood (see Trevarthen's work, 1992; Effective Early Learning project: Pascal et al., 1995). From April 1989 to June 1991, the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) funded a 'Language in the National Curriculum (LINC)' project with the aim "to serve as the basis of how teachers are trained to understand how the English language works and inform professional discussion in all aspects of English teaching" (Kingman and Cox Reports, 1989). The project had been originally funded to run until March 1992 and its aim was "to mediate to teachers the wide view of the language curriculum" as taken from the Reports. In June 1991, the project was prohibited from formal publication, being deemed unsuitable material for classroom use (Eggar, 1991). LINC makes no specific reference to Nursery Education but explains to teachers in thirty pages with examples and activities, how language functions and how meaning and local variations are communicated in early talk, early reading and writing. LINC expressed the marginalised view of the social constructivists who believe, as Bradley and Schaefer (1998) did that,

"criteria for judging either reality or validity are not absolutist but rather are derived from community consensus regarding what is 'real', 'what is useful', and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps)".

Social constructivists believe that social phenomena consist of meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena. The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructivists

because it is the meaning-making/ sense-making / attributional activities that shape action (or inaction). The meaning-making activities themselves can be changed after investigation, when they are found to be incomplete, faulty or malformed (see Lincoln and Guba in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

This thesis adopts the position of social constructivism looking in particular at discourse, (see Halliday, Vygotsky, Bruner and Drama in Education in chapters one and two). These philosophies and their representatives have not called themselves social constructivists as such. However, they view the social world through a similar perspective as their paradigms are oriented towards the production of reconstructed understandings (meaning) of the social world in the domain of education. In these philosophies the topic 'language' is viewed in a learning process, as language-in-action and as an exchange of meanings in the form of a dialogue. In the living process the child builds up a constant rapport with the environment through play. This process equips him/her with experiences and knowledge. In the learning process the development of the child's cognitive relationship with the world is subjected to transformation of concepts and changes of their structure. The methodology of the 'Zone of Proximal Development', quite similar to the process of 'self spectator' in Drama in Education, are scaffolding processes of teacher intervention that make use of play, fantasy and imagination to construct meaning and instruct learning. In this way Drama in Education forms the social context, and both the Zone of Proximal Development and self-spectator are teaching methodologies which assist children to elaborate socially available skills and knowledge which they will internalise during the process.

The application of socio-constructivist views in education would regard the child as investigator of the social world and would adopt a holistic and dialogic (inter-

psychological/intra-psychological) approach to the development of a critical personality. Lincoln and Guba (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:158) have described the constructivist approach thus:

“ it connects action to praxis and builds on antifoundational arguments while encouraging experimental and multivoiced texts”.

3.2.5 The history behind the current domain

In our times, language in formal education is still influenced by the philosophies of logic and science principally concerned with the rational reconstruction of scientific knowledge by means of the semantic and syntactic analysis (Kress, 1995; Fairclough, 1992). An example is the structure of teaching the English language in a Word - Sentence - Text form in the National Literacy Strategy (1998) in England and Wales. In this section I will highlight some of the political, economical and cultural reasons that encouraged the development of this approach.

Apart from the philosophies which underpin developments in education, education as a field of major political and economic issues, in Bourdieu's (1993:164) sense, embodies dominant and dominated forces which control the field. Bourdieu states (1993:164) that,

“the field is the place of entirely specific struggles, notably concerning the question of knowing who is part of the universe, who is a real writer and who is not... somewhat like a prism which refracts every external determination: demographic, economic or political events are always retranslated according to the specific

logic of the field, and it is by this intermediary that they act on the logic of the development of works”.

The country had invested generously in education in the 1960s and as Simon (1988: 20) describes,

“the country’s leading economists held that investment in education increased the stock of ‘human capital’ which is the key to enhanced productivity and economic growth”.

But soon after the economic crisis of the 1970s it appeared that education had ‘failed’ - and as Simon (1988:20) states,

“ this was the message emblazoned in the headlines of the tabloid press and repeated, perhaps more discreetly, in the quality papers and on television”.

The country’s crisis turned on the schools as optimistic economists argued that increased investment in education would lead to an immediate increase in output or gross national product. It was not therefore industry or industrialists who were responsible for this crisis but schools, the teachers and the local education authorities because they could not produce young people with the skills required by industry. The government’s response in 1976 was to make the schools more responsive to industry. Priority therefore was given to secondary education - specifically directed at a new system of comprehensive schools which would educate all pupils of secondary school age. Simon (1988:21) notes that education, although admired abroad until then:

“ was also subjected to criticism in particular for the use of ‘modern methods’ as celebrated in the Plowden Report of 1967”.

In the 1960s and 1970s early childhood issues were not the main area of concern for governments. These issues were mainly discussed in the field of developmental psychology, and consequently Piaget's theory was adopted by British teachers creating a major effect of assuming that children under five had certain limitations (David, 1998). This may be one of the reasons why between the 1970s and the 1990s, the governments' interest in the development of skills was more directed towards Primary and Secondary education rather than at Early Years.

However, the paper of Douglas and Ross (1965) who claimed that children who had attended nursery school gained cognitively and emotionally in the long run was very influential. Two years later the publication of the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) increased interest in early childhood education and policy-makers were looking for 'best practice', attempting to measure effectiveness. In the 1960s and '70s the practices in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America were similar, where the educational research had been based on positivistic, natural science models (David, 1998).

Therefore, Early Years education continued to develop informally as a system of education based more on developments of research and 'progressive' methods that had inspired education in the 1960s, but unaffected by the political debates which were changing the fields of Primary and Secondary education.

Much research was carried out from the middle of the 1970s onwards (see Tizard, 1974; Clark and Cheyne, 1979; Clark, 1988, the Oxford Project: Sylva, Roy and Painter, 1980; Wood, McMahon and Cranstoun, 1980; the Keele Preschool Project: Hutt et al., 1989). The focus of these projects however was on young children at home, cognitive skills, evaluation of services, social

disadvantage, shortage of teachers, length of time in the setting, the number of children in the group and their effects on children's progress as measured by intelligence tests (David, 1988). It was thought that language deficits were in large part responsible for later school failure and thus a number of large -scale studies and research on language development and reading from within the United Kingdom (see Clark, 1976; Tough, 1976; Wells, 1986) and from abroad (Clay, 1972) were initiated.

In 1996 the DFEE published a vouchers scheme. This scheme introduced a Curriculum in the form of desirable outcomes for learning for children to achieve by the time they entered compulsory education (the term after the child's fifth birthday). The scheme divides nursery education into six areas of learning: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development (DFEE, 1996). The vouchers scheme did not spread widely to all areas of England as was originally planned, but the division of Nursery education into six areas of learning was established at that point and carried on until 1999.

3.3 Summary

In this chapter, a historical review of education since the seventeenth century aimed to offer information about Early Years and present an understanding of the different social, political and cultural contexts in which the various models evolved. Throughout this process, I particularly emphasised philosophies and ideas about the concepts of language teaching and learning, with particular emphasis on Early Years.

Ethos, praxis and methodology seem to be reflected explicitly or implicitly in the romantic pedagogues of the eighteenth century, the developments of cognitive psychology and Darwin's theory of evolution in the nineteenth century. Previous ideas, with positive or negative effect, impact upon educational systems such as, 'schools as scientific workplaces in the service of life' (Bacon); 'the empirical experience in the service of human reasoning and critical thinking' (Descartes); and 'education for the whole of the human race' and 'teaching through the senses' (Comenius). However, apart from the various philosophies which underlie influences and developments in the education of the young, early childhood in England has remained largely unrecognised at a political level as an important stage of education until recently (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage, 2000). Though it continued to develop, informally and unaffected by political debates which were changing the fields of Primary and Secondary education, Early Years systems of education were based on developments in research and the 'progressive' methods that had inspired education in the 1960s. Chapter four will explore these issues further through a textual analysis of authoritative documents in Early Years education.

Chapter Four

Mind the gap

A textual and cultural comparison of official and authoritative views of teaching/learning language in the Early Years

4.1 Introduction- Understanding the new Early Years Curriculum

Having explored the socio-historical genesis of early childhood education in the previous chapter, and having paid particular attention to the development and use of early years language, it is necessary now to closely examine how, when and where these well researched precepts of good practice were reflected in curriculum documents, both nationally and internationally. The Italian experience, as reflected in the practice of the Reggio Emilia pre-schools and infant-toddler centres, will provide a useful counterbalance to the newly devised Curriculum Guidance and the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage in the UK. This chapter will examine both models in an effort to highlight the similarities and differences ordained in these documents. A third model of practice (the Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage for Coventry LEA), which serves to mediate between the Italian experience and the National Curriculum, will be explored as a more culturally appropriate practice in British schools.

As was shown in previous chapters, the development of curricula is usually predicated upon cultural, economic, political, historical and social factors dominant at any given time. The three models discussed in this chapter will be examined against these influential factors. Particular attention will be paid to the language used in each document in an effort to reveal the dominant ideological, political, economic and social factors underpinning each model. Where a model reflects an emphasis on the role and value of play in early years education, it will be highlighted and discussed against the findings from chapters one and two.

This chapter explores the phenomena of teaching and learning language in Early Years education in three current cultural domains: the theoretical context for the 2000 Curriculum Guidance and the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage for England and Wales; the paradigm for Early Years education in Reggio Emilia pre-schools and infant-toddler centres in northern Italy and the 2000 Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage for Coventry LEA.

These three models have been selected for two reasons.

1. They reflect divergent conceptions of the aims and objectives of language teaching and learning in Early Years settings. If the three models are viewed in a continuum, the 2000 Curriculum and the Reggio Emilia model could be placed at opposite ends as they reflect divergent philosophies and cultural practices, and the Coventry framework could be placed somewhere in the middle.

2. The child development research in this country (David, 1998) locates its origins in the traditions of psychology and psychoanalysis on language development, parenting and human behaviour (Freud: 1905, 1938, 1927, 1946, 1953, 1970; 1977; Piaget: 1929, 1959; Bowlby: 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1969, 1982, 1973). However, despite the efforts of the early pioneers such as Owen (in Butt, 1971; in Altfest, 1977), Pestalozzi (in Silber, 1976; in Downe, 1975); Dewey (1902, 1916, 1938); Froebel (in Lilley, 1967; in Kilpatrick, 1916), Montessori (1912) and Isaacs (1930, 1933) on significant issues related to the analysis of children's behaviour in education and the importance of play, Early Years only recently accomplished a recognised status, having its own Curriculum as an independent unit of study in the year 2000 in this country. However, in other countries pedagogical developments which emerged from relevant research, were

reflected in educational practice much earlier, around 1945. The northern part of Italy, is one such example where the “educators were rewarded for their visions to new expectations about care and education for young children” (Edwards et.al., 1998). This chapter also seeks to establish the extent to which any of the existing models, as represented in this thesis by three well known curricula/practices, embrace language learning through play and drama.

4.2 Methodology: textual analysis

In the sections that follow the methodology of textual analysis will be used to explore ideological information as revealed in authoritative documents (government, local government and the dominant group in Reggio Emilia of Italy) in relation to teaching and learning language in three different cultural contexts. This will assist in exploring the relationship between the documents and their cultural context. A comparison between the three models will serve to establish similarities and differences in teaching and learning based on an understanding of the different social, political and cultural contexts in which the models were produced. The most important points that advocate textual analysis as an appropriate methodology in this part of the thesis are as follows.

1. Firstly, texts are political (Fiske, 1994; Bourdieu, 1977) and their language can reveal information about the interests of the dominant classes and the conditions of production. Texts are the products of cultural commodity and political economy (Fiske 1994; Fairclough, 1992). By viewing texts as political documents I examine texts as products of a process of text production and as social in their origins in Fairclough’s sense

(Fairclough, 1989); that is, their nature is dependent on the social relations and struggles out of which they are generated. These struggles generate conflict in the field of social and cultural production in Bourdieu's understanding (Bourdieu, 1993).

2. Secondly, the selected texts in this section introduce three paradigms as belief systems that represent situational views (context and time) as originally suggested by Malinowski (1923), elaborated by Firth (1950/1957), and practiced by Halliday (1978). In Bourdieu's (1993) account 'belief' is the ideology of creation, which makes the author (in this study the producer of the Curriculum document), the first and the last source of the value of the work. In Halliday's (1978) description, the 'context' of the situation is language that comes to life only when functioning in some environment. Halliday (1978:28) states that,

"we experience language in relation to a scenario, some background of persons and actions and events from which the things which are said derive their meaning".

More specifically, these documents introduce educational paradigms which represent belief systems with reference to a particular historical and cultural context. These are some of the ways in which culture circulates through language meanings, values, belief systems and ideologies (Gee,1999; Kress, 1995). Language and texts in this context resonate the continuous personal and social struggle for meaning. As Fiske (1994:197) describes,

"texts are neither commodities nor agents of the dominant ideology, but sites of struggle where the subordinate can engage in contested relations with the social interests that attempt to subordinate them."

The main thrust of the textual analysis inquiry in this thesis is not so much the analysis of meaning in discourse in the sense of looking at linguistic irregularities in utterances at a grammatical level (Carter,1995). The emphasis is more on the ways in which language functions in specific social and cultural contexts and on the social and ideological relations which are constructed in and through language to uncover such relations and the ideologies which accompany them. The ultimate purpose is not the rejection of existing theories and practices but the recognition of the dominant voice in texts, the identification of possible ideological gaps that affect effective practice. It is the understanding of the social and cultural ideologies and power relations in which these paradigms have been produced. What systems of classification in Early Years education or different ways of 'making sense of the world' or different ideologies do the three different groups suggest? Therefore, through a critical analysis of the documents against the theoretical findings contained in the first and second chapters of this thesis I intend to identify the praxis of each paradigm and the theories in action underpinning it in order to select elements that will support the genesis of a new paradigm for teaching and learning in Early Years through Drama. The selected texts are all authentic documents, in the sense of being written for a pedagogic purpose, and represent a range of genres, such as policy documents produced within institutions, policy documents from external bodies, as for example, from local authorities, the Department for Education, academic documents, media and personal documents.

4.2.1 The context of the situation

Halliday's (1978) notion of 'situation' will assist in the interpretation of the documents in this thesis when generalised or abstract meanings occur in 'critical socialising contexts'. This is a term also used by Bernstein (1971) to describe various types of situations that seem central to the child's socialisation. This is particularly important when the examination of the documents focuses on teaching, learning, educational praxis and methodology, thus the identification of a particular type of situation can offer information about the ethos and kind of learning suggested by the documents. Therefore, the notion of the 'context of the situation' as described is particularly significant for this study, firstly because it is critical in the child's learning of language, since it is through the use of language in different types of situations that the child builds on and expands his/her meaning potential (see Halliday, 1978).

Secondly, this study examines teaching and learning in relation to language for meaning-making, therefore the notion has a significant value to the whole thesis.

These contexts or 'generalised situation types' as Bernstein describes them (1971:181,198) are the following:

"the regulative context' where the child is made aware of the rules of the moral order, and their various backings; 'the instructional context' or 'heuristic function', the child's early use of language to explore his environment... where the child learns about the objective nature of objects and persons, and acquires skills of various kinds; 'the imaginative or innovative contexts' and the 'interpersonal context'".

The notion of context of situation is not only significant for this thesis, it also becomes important for schools because schools base their requirements on 'naturalised' assumptions, on concepts and ideas which are problematic or contested but basic to the educational process such as that the child should be able to use language in certain ways (The National Literacy Strategy, 1998). These assumptions state that all children should be able to use language to learn. Halliday (1978:31) notes that,

"The teacher operates in contexts of situation where it simply has to be taken for granted that for every child, by the time he/she arrives in school, language is a means for learning. Less obvious assumption but not less fundamental is that language is a means of personal expression and participation. These assumptions may be true as they stand... but the kind of meanings that one child expects to be associated with any particular context of situation may differ widely from what is expected by another".

These differences in the meaning potential as Halliday (1972; 1973), Hasan (1971) and Bernstein (1973) have described find their origins in the social structure.

4.3 Socio-historical interpretation of the Early Years Curriculum

My commentary will concentrate on selected texts from the National Curriculum for Early Years which expresses views related to methodology, praxis and ethos of education. In order to prevent possible misunderstanding, I need to stress that such an examination may be incomplete and may need to be complemented by analysis of other texts

such as interviews, speeches and curriculum planning sheets that provide evidence about the material processes at issue. But the analysis of the documents in this chapter will focus only on word and sentence meaning. More particularly this section will elaborate on which pedagogic theories and political ideologies underpin Early Years education in relation to the teaching of language. It will raise such questions as: what kind of learning and teaching is suggested or implied; what context for language learning and teaching do the documents refer to; what domains of experience, in terms of teaching and learning are more emphasised than others? The traces within the texts may be incomplete and open to different interpretation but in my commentaries, I do not see the texts as isolated units but rather reflective of the whole document and relevant materials. The documents express the ideology of temporal powers (see Bourdieu, 1993) such as, the governments, and communicate information about teaching and learning in Early Years. I therefore consider the particular issues in accordance with the framework of a general social theory which produces the discourse in an attempt to make sense of the theory. In other words, particular texts act in a way in accordance with the 'context of the situation' (Halliday, 1978; Fairclough, 1992) and interpret the totality of the social practice which the textual discourse is a part of. The texts will also influence my predictions about the meanings (Fairclough, 1992) in situational contexts (see Halliday, Bernstein). I will therefore identify particular textual elements in the production of discourse which will facilitate this examination.

To illustrate these points, I will firstly elaborate on past social and economic factors which changed the direction of education and created the need for a National Curriculum in England. I will then explore the present (2001) government documents and training material for teachers which establish

the educational domain for Early Years education in England and Wales. This part will seek to answer questions such as: what is the National Curriculum for Early Years education about? What kind of political, social, educational or economic forces recognise Early Years as an important educational phase in the year 2000 and not before? The purpose of these enquiries is not the exploration of the issues in depth, but in order to seek information from relevant textual material and establish the socio-political context that highlight the ethos, praxis and methodology of Early Years education, I need to view them in relation to other changes that took place in education about the same time. This will facilitate a more direct approach to the reading between the lines of the texts that follow. Furthermore, as Avis et.al. (1991:270) stated,

“making things explicit is a step to being sufficiently conscious about social discrepancies to change them. This is most definitely not the only mode of change, but in educational contexts, under the sign of learning, it must surely be an important one.”

The most significant socio-economic phenomenon which had an immediate affect on education was the rise of capitalism in Britain and the Western post war world. This can be explained by looking at the period from 1960-1987 when the educational scene was entirely different from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the latter period the educational ideology supported ways through which education could change society based on ‘progressivist’ methods in child-centred education, the possibility of developing human potential, enlarging the intellect through the acquisition of knowledge and devising teaching to this end. However, in the

twentieth century, more specifically after the second world war, Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that the educational structure and ethos 'corresponded' to the structure and ethos of the institutions of monopoly capitalism, that is, corporate and industrial development which the rise of capitalism brought up in the Western parts of the world. Bourdieu (1977) in his analysis of the prevailing socio-economic atmosphere notes that education inevitably reflected the interests of one or other of the dominant power groups or classes in society; it was either concerned with the reproduction of the direct needs of capitalist industry or with those existing class and group relations necessary for the maintenance of the status quo. An example was the 1988 Reform Act in the educational system in England and Wales where significant change took place in the basic power structure of the system; more power for the Secretary of State and less for the local education authorities (Maclure, 1988). Therefore, educationalists as a whole were allotted little or no autonomous power or scope for activity and their task was defined, and indeed determined by, inexorable forces quite outside of their control.

By the 1970's Giddens (1998) stated that in the social and economic domain runaway regulations, high taxes, monetary inflation owned industry, and in some countries, inefficient government, were sapping economic dynamism. The political success of Thatcher in Britain and Regan in the United States introduced the 'ideal' of free markets (neoliberalism) as an engine of economic development, an ideological stance appealing to individualists rather than to social values, the ideology which was previously developed by the socialists in Britain. Giddens (1998:1-2) expresses the

melancholy and the sense of loss with which the Old Leftists reluctantly accepted the market. He states:

“socialism and communism have passed away, yet they remain to haunt us. We cannot just put aside the values and ideals that drove them, for some remain intrinsic to the good life that it is the point of social and economic development to create. The challenge is to make these values count where the economic programme of socialism has become discredited”.

Inevitably Education went through a transformation which was far beyond the theories of educational development and pedagogy (Freud: 1905, 1938, 1927, 1946, 1953, 1970, 1977; Piaget: 1929, 1959; Bowlby: 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1969, 1982, 1973), Pestalozzi (Silber, 1976; Downe 1975); Dewey (1902, 1916, 1938); Froebel (Lilley, 1967; Kilpatrick, 1916), Montessori (1912), Isaacs (1930, 1933). It turned on larger social and political questions which related the aims of education to those of society. As Maclure (1988:156) stated,

“The post-war period in England was optimistic in regard to education. Most people were generally agreed about the aims of education, vocational, cultural, personal and the belief in some Adam Smith - like divine hand which would miraculously ensure that the sum of all these individual aims would add up to the aims of society - the basic premise on which a publicly - provided child - centred education depended”.

During the period 1975 to 1985 the expressed concerns and the actions undertaken by the Government were related to issues such as, how schools and teachers perform; education for life versus education for a job; teachers and their professionalism, their accountability and willingness to share curriculum concerns with parents and public; teaching methods and the curriculum with an attack on progressive methods and a call for a core curriculum (Black et al., 1992). These are highlighted in Prime Minister Callaghan's speech on 22 October (Maclure, 1988). He stated that,

"We spend £6 billion a year on education.... If everything is reduced to such phrases as 'educational freedom versus state control' we shall get nowhere.... I repeat that parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of higher education and both sides of industry, together with the Government, all have an important part to play in formulating and expressing the purpose of education and the standards that we need".

This quote emerges in a 'media' document. It is authoritative discourse with declarative and imperative clauses in the sense of Prime Minister Callaghan announcing to public the intentions of the Government in relation to education. The verb 'I repeat' indicates how imperative these actions are. The writer - reader relationship, the two subject positions set up in the clause, is between Callaghan who represents the Government, telling the public what is the case in certain terms, and the public being told, but the word 'together' highlights the Government's intention between the lines of the text that is, co-operation and not imposition and that that the authority 'values' the agents involved in education. However, no reference was made to children as vehicles in the conception and production of education

(Simon, 1985). Further down in the same article Callaghan refers mainly to teachers, pupils and their education and the reasons why the governments' intentions are so imperative stating that,

"My travels around the country... show concerns about some of these matters. First let me say, so that there should be no misunderstanding, that I have been very impressed by a number of the schools..., by the enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching profession, by the variety of the courses that are offered..., especially in the arts and crafts as well as in other subjects, and by the alertness and keenness of many of the young people I have met.... But I am concerned... to find complaints from industry that new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job as required.... I have been concerned to find that many of our best trained students who have completed the higher levels of education at university or polytechnic have no desire or intention of joining industry. Their preferences are to stay in academic life (very pleasant, I know) or to find their way into the civil service. There seems to be a need for a more technological bias in science teaching that will lead towards practical applications in industry rather than towards academic studies.... The goals of our education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough. They are to equip our children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive place in society and also to fit them to do a job of work. Not one or another, but both" (The Times Educational Supplement, 1976).

To interpret this text I will set out the view of the interrelationship of language and society, with an emphasis upon power and ideology. This analysis adopts Fairclough's position (1989) that language connects with society through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site

of, and a stake in, struggles for power. To elaborate this belief in making particular reference to the text of the Prime Minister's discourse, I shall be looking at the situational context as described by Mallinowski and Halliday (see chapter one) that is, the social situation as a semantic structure deriving from culture as a system of meanings, a semiotic system. The use of language in Callaghan's speech is socially determined (Fairclough, 1989) by the following ideological and social phenomena as variables of the society in the 1970s and '80s in Britain and the global world. The relationship between social classes in economic production and in all parts of the society; the power of the capitalist class on its ability to control the state; the state as a key element in maintaining the dominance of the capitalist class, and controlling the working class. (Simon, 1988). More specifically the speech expresses the Government's serious doubts about what schools and teachers were doing.

In the first part of the speech the clause is declarative as the Prime Minister is trying ("there should be no misunderstandings") to be positive ("I have been impressed", "the enthusiasm and the dedication of the teaching profession") in relation to what schools, teachers and 'progressive education' had achieved up to this point in time. In Mr Callaghan's point of view, the schools' success was mainly oriented towards "the arts and crafts..." which had alerted the students' interest and desire for further academic knowledge and achievements and for professional development in civil sectors of the society "the alertness and keenness of many of the young people... to stay in academic life or to find their way into the civil service". If one looks at the cohesion of the text, the word "concerned" is repeated in different forms, as a noun and as a verb, and the conjunctive word "but" gives an insight into

the systems of knowledge, beliefs, social relationships and social identities. Therefore the social classes in social institutions like schools and Universities (parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of Higher Education) often have very little in the way of direct links to the capitalist class. Mr. Callaghan empowers the social classes in his speech stating that "they have got an important part to play in formulating and expressing" the capitalist class' ideology, which seems to be "the need for a more technological bias in industry rather than towards academic studies". Mr Callaghan "knows" that what the pupils and students are interested in, "academic life" and "civil service" "is very pleasant" but he then expresses the dominant class' ideology in the statement of "the goals of our education... to fit them to do a job of work". This ideological power, the power to project the dominant class' practices as universal and 'common sense' by the use of simple (comprehensible statements) and generalisations is exercised in the speech's discourse through winning the social classes' consent (Simon, 1985).

Between 1976 and 1985 the government set up actions to raise standards in literacy and mathematics in order to equip pupils to work in the industry. Mrs Thatcher's election victory in 1979, led to the incorporation of the national curriculum in the 1988 Education Act and opened the way for the Inspectorate to reassert its inspectorial role in schools over that of friendly advice (Cockerel et al., 1984). A year before the recent Labour government was elected in Britain, in 1996; it had set up a Literacy Task Force, which published a report in the summer of 1997, setting out a National Literacy Strategy. The strategy was aimed at meeting the government's target that by 2002 80% of 11-year-olds should reach Level 4 or above in the English tests

which are taken by all primary school pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (Sealey, 1999). Two years later, the Department for Education and Employment published the National Numeracy Strategy (1999). Similarly, the aim is that 75% of 11-year-olds should “reach the standard of mathematics expected for their age by 2002”. The implementation of both Strategies was supported by extensive public funding for resources and training. The materials identified teaching objectives throughout the primary school age range from Reception (4 to 5 year-olds) to the end of Key Stage 2 (10 to 11 year olds). Both frameworks, distributed to all primary schools, were submitted in a ring-binder form, a presentation that adds status to both these subjects. Until then (1999), the planning for Nursery education (3 to 4 year olds) and for the Reception age children who had no Nursery experience or had not fulfilled the Nursery education requirements was based on a document called ‘Desirable Learning Outcomes’ (1996) which introduced six areas of learning in Nursery education and was presented in the form of a booklet for use by Nursery staff.

The new Early Years Curriculum (1999) chronologically coincides with the government’s goal to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. The new Curriculum for Early Years education was delivered in schools in four stages. The initial version of the Curriculum is a similar publication to the ‘Desirable Learning Outcomes’. It was delivered to schools as a booklet, and is called ‘Early Learning Goals’ (1999). The producers of the document aim to introduce the early learning goals, to help practitioners understand these goals, to plan appropriate activities according to the goals and provide a basis for discussion and reflection (1999:p.3). This is a rather confusing statement because the previous document that Nursery staff were using for

the planning, delivery and assessment of Nursery children was similar in its main body of information. The main differences between the old 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' (1996) and the new 'Early Learning Goals' (1999) are: the front and back covers; the general format and the names to describe the 'six areas of learning'; the introduction of new terminology such as, 'practitioners', meaning all staff working in Early Years education; the provision of free part time early years education for "all four year olds whose parents want a place" and for "one third of three year olds" (1999:p.4); and finally, the age range of the children that will be taught under the title 'Early Years Curriculum'. In particular, the producers of the document (1999:4) state that,

"The period from age three to the end of the reception year is described as a foundation stage. It is a distinct stage and important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The early learning goals set out what is expected for most children by the end of the foundation stage".

This last point is the most crucial one in searching for similarities and differences between the two documents, as it raises issues about the structure, the ethos and the setting of Early Years education, topics which I will refer to in my discussion shortly.

The 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' (2000) or 'Stepping stones of progress towards the Early Learning goals', a ring-binder of material that followed the year after, has a similar presentation to the Numeracy and the Literacy documents. The document aims to guide

'practitioners' into ways to achieve the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. An important statement in the document (2000:27) is that,

"The early learning goals are in line with the objectives in the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics, which should be taught throughout the reception year".

The recognition of Early Years education with a 'formal' Curriculum takes place about the same time as Numeracy and Literacy become obligatory and core subjects take up at least 70% of the daily curriculum time. This thesis does not aim to offer a detailed account of these issues but elements will be highlighted throughout the consideration of texts that follow.

In 2001, 'A Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage' followed the previous two documents and was presented in the same way, as a ring-binder, including a video tape and a CD as guidance for training in this new phase of Early Years education. This document appears to be a similar one to the Literacy and Numeracy training materials. Finally, in October 2001 a new document called 'Planning for learning in the foundation stage' is introduced in Early Years settings to assist practitioners with planning and implementing the Early Learning goals. The educational status of Early Years education is raised and the documents contribute to this development. Early years staff in Primary state schools, Reception classes, found difficulty in identifying common ground between Nursery education and the measurable results through which Primary education could prove achievement and success (Simon, 1985). Extra training to all Early Years staff was needed to clarify any possible ambiguities. The Literacy and Numeracy projects were supported by extensive public funding for both resources and training in order to accomplish successful implementation in

schools. There is no exact numerical evidence on staff that went through particular training in Early Years but informal discourse with Early Years teachers from schools in Birmingham revealed that co-ordinators received a more descriptive account on educational actions that had to take place in schools on which they had to inform their colleagues. The general Early Years 'laws' seemed to apply to all settings in England and Wales but particular guidelines were flexible and were subjected to individual educational authorities and the schools' philosophy.

4.4 The Curriculum Guidance and the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage

At this point, I will classify the socio-linguistic and pedagogic principles that were previously explored (see chapters 1 and 2) which highlight the ethos of Early Years education, the praxis and the educational methodology. These principles have described the notion of 'a holistic and a living curriculum' (see Bruner in chapter one and Drama in Education in chapter two) and are summarised in Table 1 that follows. The concepts reflected in this table act as key words which reflect the theory and practice of language and Drama in Education. It aims to facilitate not only the textual analysis of the documents but also the development of a methodology based on the principles and practice as explored in chapters one and two.

Table 1: Holistic - Living Curriculum

Ethos	Praxis	Methodology
teaching and learning	teaching and learning	teaching and learning
social context	social context	social context
interaction	interaction	interaction
discourse (communication)	discourse	discourse (commun.)
meaning-making	action/activity	action/activity
signification	meaning-making	meaning-making
quality of learning experiences	signification	signification
scaffolding	structured or unstructured learning	ZOPD
role of teacher	ZOPD	scaffolding
role of learner	scaffolding	teachers' language registers
reflection and evaluation in teaching and learning	teaching/ learning practice	aims and objectives
ZOPD	reflection/evaluation	reflection and evaluation
	learning experience based on interaction, discourse, action, meaning-making	methodology for experiential learning

4.4.1 Educational and pedagogic ethos

Ethos can be manifested in the social identity of documents which the producers implicitly or explicitly signal when reading between the lines of text takes place. Fairclough (1992:166) in his enquiry of models deployed to constitute ethos, the social identity and 'self', states that, "ethos is intertextual and can be communicated in discourses of the lifeworld". An examination of the ethos of education that texts and events imply is not related to the creation and application of rules and principles that determine a direct judgement of right and wrong activities. As Schwandt (1994:122) suggests, "the interpretation process requires a rationale (not the following of procedures or rules) and the making of an interpretation... and cannot be verifiable or testable". The rationale of the interpretation, therefore, against the holistic and 'living' curriculum that was suggested in previous chapters, is a set of criteria derived from previous chapters which will attempt to answer such questions as, 'who these documents refer to?' Do they intend to meet the needs of particular educational policies? Do they suggest a teaching methodology that will assist teachers' planning? Do they facilitate a child-centred education which meets the needs of children? This exploration which is based on an interpretation of documents will begin with the following general facts.

1. Firstly, that the aims and principles as described in the documents may partly highlight the ethos of education as set up by the documents' producers. In fact, although, as the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:11) states,

"These principles are drawn from, and are evident in, good and effective practice in early years settings,"

They do not necessarily reflect a general and broad educational view as to whether the practice offered in the form of examples throughout the document represents a wide spectrum of the Early Years educational society. No particular reference to the kind of research that has been undertaken is made. The only names in the document appear in the 'Foreword' and these are Margaret Hodge and Nick Tate who represent the government.

2. Secondly, the documents were produced in the following chronological order: Early Learning Goals (1999), Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000), A Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage (2000), and Planning for Learning in the Foundation Stage (2001). However, their chronological production does not necessarily coincide with their delivery time in schools. The Early Learning Goals (1999) arrived in most schools halfway through the year 2000 but the document (1999:3) states that,

"This booklet... will replace the current, age-related, desirable learning outcomes from September 2000".

3. Lastly, there is a considerable change in the fact that the Reception year will not be viewed as part of Primary education anymore. Instead, together with the Nursery year, they constitute what the documents' producers call, 'Foundation stage'. What does this change refer to?

The following quotes highlight language as an interpersonal function. They express their producers' views about the ways through which they view social relations (reception teachers- children's education) and identities (the social role of the reception teachers) (Fairclough, 1992). This is a cultural

change in which the social identity of Reception teachers is associated with specific domains (Literacy, Numeracy), and institutions (schools) are redefined and reconstituted; the purpose of education focuses on Literacy and Numeracy. In the 'Foreword' of the 'Curriculum Guidance' (2000) Nick Tate states that, "we have worked closely throughout with our national partners, in particular the national literacy and numeracy strategies and Ofsted". No reference to educationalists and pedagogues who have inspired these principles is made. The principles come into view as if they have been activated for the purpose of Early Years education by the anonymous authors of the document.

Moreover, in the production and delivery of the documents there seems to be an inconsistency. Firstly, if the 'Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage' (2000) and 'Planning for Learning in the Foundation Stage' (2001) incorporate material that could support the implementation of the 'new approach' and assist practitioners with their planning, would they not have been more helpful if they had arrived in schools together with the 'Early Learning Goals' (1999) and the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage' (2000)?

The principles however, as set up in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) advocate that previous knowledge of child development is a prerequisite for planning a relevant curriculum. In the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:11) it is stated that,

"Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements".

All adults who work in the setting under the title 'practitioners' have an equal role to play in the broad education of children. What does the document imply by the use of the term practitioners? Perhaps there is a division between theory and practice and that someone else, maybe the authors of the documents, retain the power of theory while allowing 'practitioners' to implement the practice. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:1) states that,

“The adults, who work in the settings, whatever their qualifications, are referred to as practitioners”.

This particular point can raise many questions in relation to the economic and educational status of teaching staff. An example is the fact that teachers' payment is higher than support staff (language and learning assistants, nursery nurses, classroom assistants) who consider themselves underpaid and consequently demand the right to work less hours than the teachers. As they do not hold a teaching qualification they are not allowed by the law to be in charge of a classroom without a teacher's presence, even if they are experienced, know the children well and have been trusted by school and parents to educate children. Furthermore, the division between members of staff in schools (Head teacher, leadership team, teachers, classroom assistants and nursery nurses) reinforces hierarchy in roles, positions and responsibilities and not equality of opportunity.

The 'principles of education' focus on two major areas: effective education and parental involvement. Firstly in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage (2000:11) it is stated that,

“Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years - physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially”.

The statement implies that practitioners have a firm knowledge of developmental psychology. However, an Early Years advisor from the Birmingham Advisory Service, on a teacher training day delivering the Foundation stage at a community school in Birmingham (17th December, 2001) stated that, “developmental psychology was no more one of the taught subjects in teacher training courses since 1980. In Britain there was no training on offer to specialised teachers in Early Years and the choice for training in education was limited between teaching posts in Primary and Secondary education or for assisting posts in schools. Three years ago, some Colleges and Universities have begun to offer specialised training in Early Years Education and Care for teachers and assistants.” This highlights the fact that the Foundation Stage curriculum places major demands on teachers without offering the training they need in order to understand the documents’ teaching objectives and how to teach the children.

Also in relation to ‘parental involvement’ the document (2000:11) states that,

“Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence”.

To view this statement in parallel with Callaghan’s speech in 1976, the issue of ‘parent/teacher links’ is encouraged and also supported by the Foundation Stage document, though Callaghan’s and later, the New Right government’s expectations appear to be different. The 1976 government required parents to check on teachers, their methods and professionalism

as a result of a veiled criticism on 'progressive methods'. In the 1980s, as a result of the free-market modern society and in support of private education and of comprehensive schools, parents were given the choice, through the voucher scheme, to 'buy' private or selective education for their child.

In the Foundation Stage curriculum (2000) the words 'together' and 'mutual' place the two subjects 'parents' and 'teachers' in an equal position as both learning from each other and creating a confident and secure environment for the children. Three significant points are worth mentioning in this regard.

- Firstly, the social and individual identity of the teacher,
- Secondly, the social and individual identity of parents and
- Thirdly, the social and individual identity of the child in the current educational system.

These points echo previous influences from the progressive theories of education and current systems of child-centred education such as, the Reggio Emilia system.

4.4.2 Teachers' professionalism

Since Callaghan's speech and during the decade 1980-1990 teachers' professionalism experienced contradiction, difficulty and demoralisation within an education system that was involved in the perpetuation of inequality. The resolution of these difficulties in 'Better Schools' (1987) was to edge carefully towards a modern curriculum. Baker in his speech at Manchester University said:

"I see the national curriculum as a way of increasing our social coherence... the cohesive role of the national curriculum will provide our society with a greater sense of identity (Guardian, 16 September 1987).

The notion of 'cohesion' was interesting, but the great delusion was that all pupils - black and white, working-class and middle-class, boys and girls- will receive the curriculum in the same way. But as Johnson (Johnson in Avis et al, 1991:80) said,

"The only kind of 'coherence' achievable in a complex society is one in which differences are recognised and inequalities negotiated".

That is, instead of being presented as 'objective', a curriculum needs to subjectify itself, acknowledging its own roots in culture; history and social interests (see Bruner, 1974; Halliday, 1975; 1979 and Vygotsky in Moll, 1990). This view is explored as sets of practical statements in the 'Curriculum Guidance' (2000) document where the role of teaching staff, parents and children is elaborated further.

Moreover, the child appears to play a central role in the current Early Years curriculum (2000:11-12) where it is stated that,

"No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.... Well planned and well organised environment for children to have rich and stimulating experiences.... Opportunities for children to plan or initiate activities themselves."

However, in order to implement these principles, the government relies heavily on practitioners. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) implies that practitioners are responsible for the children's education, parents' training and for their own professional development. The implication of this will be that teachers will have to find their own ways to train themselves. As mentioned earlier the government allocated funding for the training of teaching staff in the Literacy and Numeracy strategies and continues to invest but in this case it relies heavily on individual schools' provision of training from their own budget. In the Curriculum Guidance (2000:12-13), practitioners are relied upon, in a grossly under resourced capacity to:

“manage the transition between home and setting and between different settings..., establish trust and respect with parents and children..., ensure equality of opportunity..., have an understanding of [children's development] from birth to age six..., have a clear awareness of the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to learning...”.

And yet the harsh reality is that teachers who fail to pass an OFSTED inspection will probably be labelled as 'bad teachers'. As Avis (1991:275) states,

“Teachers' practical individualism is not simply an ideological or attitudinal construct, but relates to the material conditions in which teachers labour and the way in which performance is evaluated by those with power”.

The 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' document (2000:27) also suggests that,

"The early learning goals are in line with the objectives in the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics, which should be taught throughout the reception year. ... Reception teachers may choose to cover the elements of the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson across the day rather than in a single unit of time. In order to ensure a smooth transition to the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson in year 1, both should be in place by the end of the reception year".

Furthermore, the same document (2000:27) explains that,

"This guidance helps reception teachers to plan using those objectives in order to meet the needs of the children in their classes".

Here there is a paradigm shift, a top-down model rather than a bottom-up, in which the Reception teachers have been given a choice by the government. By offering teachers the responsibility to administer the time and the method of teaching, the government appears to give them the power to exercise professional autonomy in the classroom; this can be the basis of a social-democratic educational settlement. On the other hand, the use of 'may choose' testify that the language use facilitates both the Reception teachers' control over the flux of meaning and experience in the context of the situation and the producers' control over conceptions of reality. For Halliday (1975: 124) 'choice' in the meaning potential of text (see also chapter one) "presupposes a paradigmatic environment, a set of options that have the potentiality of being selected under the given conditions". In Drama in Education (see chapter two) the teacher takes the

role of the facilitator in order to interpret children's meanings during the teaching and learning process. Fowler et al (1984: 121) state that,

"Systems are not shared by a society as a whole. Different groups have different systems, and these systems are strained by the contingencies of interaction and by conflicts of interest".

Future developments will show whether this idea, which the recent Labour government introduced, is a genuine one or it is simply the offer of an illusive autonomy. A significant point in the construction of teacher professionalism is that historically it has been and still is a key ideological element to teachers' labour, position and performance in education (heavier teaching loads, more administrative demands, less preparation time and use of pre-published material). Therefore, the ethic of legitimated teacher professionalism remains an important prop of current constructions.

4.4.3 Early Years as a stepping stone to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Considering the role of the learner with regard to ethical reflections in the quotations of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage (2000) the child appears to occupy a central position which fashions the teacher as an expert in pedagogy and their subject discipline. This view may romantically regard the role of the children as significant to other social developments (see the romantic view discussed in Chapter three) or consider teaching as an apolitical model of professionalism. The latter may inexorably lead towards the depoliticization of teachers, their domestication and incorporation (see Lawn, 1988).

Furthermore, the producers of the Early Learning Goals and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:27) explicitly express a view that offers an explanation and a reason for the particular attention being given to the Foundation Stage. According to this, Early Years appear to become a series of 'stepping stones' for the delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy hours. The authors appear not to be concerned at all with Early Years for its own sake, but rather are developing it only as a way to enhance the later Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is a reductionist attitude and does grave disservice to the scholarly body of knowledge that I have explored in earlier chapters, that testifies to the value of an Early Years education in the holistic development of the child not just in the 3 years. In this context, education appears to have gone backwards instead of forwards. Even Callaghan's early speech pointed towards the value of the arts in education. Additionally, the use of modal auxiliaries such as, 'should be taught', 'should be in place', indicate that language imposes order on the Early Years education world.

The Foundation stage as a system is not necessarily viewed and shared in the same way by different groups of Early Years teachers and the government responsible for the production of the documents. The contingencies of interaction between the Early Years teachers and the producers of the Curriculum and potential conflicts of interest between them may have implications for the educational and pedagogic ethos of Early Years education.

4.4.4 Social relations and the contexts in which language is used

In the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:20) the language expresses interpersonal meanings, that is, it functions to establish and maintain social relations. The clause in the last quote (see 4.4.2) is declarative as it contains present tense forms of the verbs 'help', 'plan', 'meet' which are categorically authoritative. In Halliday's (1997) notion of the "three features of the context of the situation" (see chapter one) the tenor of discourse refers to the socially significant relationships in which teachers and children are involved. Therefore in this document, teachers have got the emphatic actor role; they are the helpers, planners and providers. Pupils have 'needs', they are in passive role and they are therefore the receivers. The mode of discourse refers to the writer-reader-relationship as the two subject positions set up in the clause and takes place between someone telling what is the case in no uncertain terms, and someone being told. The reading behind the lines tells that 'The guidance', that is offered by the authority (one subject), will definitely 'help' the reception teachers (the other subject) to act upon children's needs. The object is obvious, the children's needs, which the authority expresses the conviction that the new Curriculum will meet. The needs of the children appear to be unquestionably known. All the three documents (the Early Learning Goals, 1999; the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, 2000 and the Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage, 2001) suggest that these needs will be met in the six areas of learning.

The grammatical structure provide the means whereby these functions of language help to explore the ideology of a society, the social relations and contexts in which the language is used, that is, the nature of the society

whose language it is (Thompson, 1985; Fowler et al, 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979). The nature of the society in which these documents are produced will need additional exploration. Meanwhile, further analysis of these documents aims to assist issues related to ideology and cultural power. These concepts may attribute more information relevant to the ethos, praxis and methodology as suggested.

In September 1999 the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) published under the name 'Curriculum' the document 'Early Learning Goals' that develops further, in sets of signposts, the government's views and expectations in relation to Early Years. Similar principles were introduced and practised in Nursery settings from 1996 until 1999 with the Desirable Learning Outcomes (1996). In the Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage (2001:10) it is stated that,

"We've got clear signposts for the curriculum; these signposts were introduced with the desirable learning outcomes; they have now been revised and elaborated in the early learning goals (ELGs) which come into effect in September 2000".

The wording has significant value here, it is significant because it indirectly expresses the new government's ideology and is part of a social (educational) change: 'clear' and 'have now been revised and elaborated'. The question is to whom are the signposts 'clear'? To the government or to the Early Years practitioners? If the signposts are 'clear' 'now' according to the government, then an interpretation of this statement may be that they were not 'clear' before. This again, may imply that previously, the

expectations for children under five were not 'clear', that there is someone else to blame for lack of clarity, that the producers of the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' were unclear or that the Curriculum was not focused, or that the purpose of teaching and learning was not 'clear'. Therefore, the 'revision' and 'elaboration' as stated later in the same paragraph (2001) has assisted the focus of the curriculum. The vocabulary as used signifies processes which happen differently in different times and places and for different groups of people (Kress and Hodge, 1979; Mey, 1985). The writer-reader-relationship is unclear in this document (2001), 'we've got', which demands the question to whom is the "we" referring to? Is it the government, Early Years experts or the academics? A clear recognition of the subject 'we' could assist the exploration of ideological, social and political issues and define the ethos and praxis of Early Years education as suggested. Here is a similar case to the one that was described in the previous paragraph, of two subject positions set up in a clause, someone (unknown) telling what is the case, 'clear signposts', in certain terms, and someone being told. The clause contains present tense forms and is authoritative. If on the other hand the text implies that the signposts are now 'clear' to the teachers, then the text imposes on to teachers a view as a fact which is not necessarily objective, accurate or tested.

4.4.5 A curriculum for Early Years

The understanding that early childhood needs not only nurturing but education also, is not a new idea. It had developed in England and Wales long before the Early Learning Goals (1999). The new idea is introduced with the Foundation Stage (2000) which emphasises 'play', 'experience' and

'investigation' as key elements in planning, teaching and learning, and extends the age range of children to be taught in that way to the age of five, a school term before the end of the Reception year. However, the Curriculum document (2000) states that the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies 'should be in place by the end of the foundation year'. This statement is open to different interpretation such as, by the end of the foundation stage 'play' should occupy less time in formal school hours and get replaced by strategies that facilitate the concepts which the two 'major' projects (Literacy and Numeracy) introduce. Or, it may mean, that 'play' should be more focused to meet the demands of Literacy and Numeracy. It could also be interpreted as meaning that having experienced long, creative and exploratory play, children at the age of five, a term before the end of the Reception, do not need to play any more. They have grown up enough to be ready to face the demands of the academic school life. Other interpretations are also possible.

Thus, the chronological co-existence between the Early Years Curriculum and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies may not be just a coincidence.

4.4.6 Concluding comments

In conclusion, what highlights the ethos of Early Years education is a recognition that children have experiences and knowledge before they go to school and early years is an important stage in children's learning and development. The ability and enthusiasm which early learners demonstrate when they meet new information could be used for the early establishment of skills which can facilitate formal teaching and learning later on. However,

the fact is that for planning and assessment of language and mathematical development, two out of the six areas of learning teachers use, in addition to the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage, the key objectives (Step 1) from the National Literacy and Numeracy documents. More specifically, the interpretation of the documents (Early Learning Goals, Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and Training Support Framework) against the criteria set up in Table 1 highlight the following key points:

1. The government's inconsistency in the production and delivery of the documents in Early Years settings (four new documents in three years) conveys fragmentation of knowledge, arbitrary values and ethics, confusion in the content and the methodology of education and diffused regimes of power.
2. In theory, the statutory guidelines extend the age range of children who attend Early Years education to the age of five.
3. Teaching takes place by all members of staff who are equally called practitioners. However, the system of hierarchy in most settings especially the ones attached to primary schools and the conditions of payment for nursery nurses reinforce conflict in roles, attitudes, hours of work and responsibilities towards teaching. This reality is largely ignored in the documents.
4. Full responsibility for young children's education and for parents' involvement lies heavily on practitioners who are the Doers and the Actors, the helpers, planners, providers and experts of child development issues, responsible for planning, delivering observing and assessing. However, the government's only responsibility for training has been limited to the document 'Training Support Framework for the Foundation Stage' (2000)', which arrived in schools approximately two years later.

5. It is stated that the child occupies a central place, but it appears to be more of a passive, dependent role rather than as a co-producer in a communication and a meaning-making process of interaction (see Vygotsky in Moll,1990; Halliday, 1975; Bruner,1990; Kress,1997).
6. In a positive way, the documents view the social context of learning as circumscribed by the concept of inclusion for any 'ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability'. It is also defined by the recognition of 'play' for situational meanings to take place. This concept will be further explored in the interpretation of praxis and methodology.
7. The process of 'making sense' in situational meanings lies heavily on practitioners who subjectively interpret children's play. This approach could not reassure parents and children that teachers understand the content of children's language. This issue will be also elaborated in praxis and methodology.
8. For the exploration of the ethos of Early Years education, a critical discourse approach focused on the aims and the principles of the documents (Early Learning Goals,1999; Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, 2000 and Training Support Framework, 2001) which made no reference to the processes of 'signification', 'scaffolding' and ZOPD. Thus it is not possible to give further consideration of these concepts here.

4.5 Educational praxis

According to different theoretical traditions, the study of practice is by no means self-explanatory despite its ubiquity and familiarity. In theory and

research, it turns out to mean different things to different people. Hence, in the following subsection I will briefly define the notion of 'praxis' in order to make it concrete for the purpose of this study and link the notions 'praxis' and 'practice', I will then select one of the theoretical traditions to elaborate on the concepts contained in Table 1, and finally, I will critically examine these concepts, using textual analysis, in order to see whether the Foundation Stage documents reflect any principles of the holistic and living curriculum.

In the dialectical method (see Marxism in chapter one), Lenin (1930), in his early writings, defined the notion 'dialectic' as not only evolution, but as 'praxis', leading from activity to reflection and from reflection to action. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) the change and evolution of practice takes into account all aspects of practice such as, the objective, external perspective of individual performances, events and effects that constitute practice; the objective, external perspective of the wider social and material conditions and interactions that constitute practice; the subjective, individualistic perspective of the intentions, meanings and actions that constitute practice; the subjective social perspective of members' own discourse community (language, discourses and traditions) that constitute practice. Therefore, as Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 578) state, the dialectical study of practice is also "political" because it is liable to change through the process of action.

However, before I attempt to offer an alternative perspective which may offer suggestions for change in the current practice, I will attempt to critically examine the current practice as it is presented in the Early Years documents in order to produce practical, pragmatic knowledge that is cultural and

structural, judged by its degree of historical situatedness and its ability to produce praxis, or action.

Earlier in this chapter (see section 4.2) the thesis adopted a social-constructivist perspective in the examination of educational documents (1999; 2000; 2001). According to this view language-in-action (discourse) is a meaning-making and sense-making activity which can shape action and produce new understandings (meanings) (see Halliday, 1978; Vygotsky in Moll, 1990; Bruner, 1990 and Drama in Education, chapter two). In this section the focus of practice will be on how action is connected to praxis in the Foundation Stage paradigm. This will be elaborated on through analysis of textual material in which the concepts demonstrated in Table 1, under the title 'praxis', will be critically examined. This examination will be based on critical analysis of texts from the 'Early Learning Goals'(1999), the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage'(2000) and 'Planning for Learning in the Foundation Stage'(2002) in which the concepts come into view. Significant for research purposes, when analysing texts for planning from the Foundation stage is the fact that, the document 'Planning for Learning' (2002) arrived last in Early Years settings when this study was ready for completion. Therefore, prior to its arrival in schools, no specification on planning had been offered to practitioners by the government.

In the document 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage', the sections 'Putting the principles into practice' (p.12) and 'Common features of good practice' (p.11) explain how the principles should look and 'act' in practice (see chapter three), rather than elaborate them through structure and methodology. More specifically, in the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' document it is stated that, "good practice will result from

these principles”, setting out thirty three principles as guidance to ‘good practice’. Therefore by ‘guidance’, the authors possibly mean, lecturing, teaching or instructing the practitioners on concepts that should be included as sets of principles in their practice to make it ‘good’. If this view explains the authors’ intentions then it consequently indicates that action is connected to practice in a set of ethical ideals which derive from educational and pedagogic theory. It is as if, there has not previously been ethical codes in place for Early Years education, therefore, the authors seek a new body of ethical directives fitted to a Curriculum. Another interpretation could be that practitioners need professional development and training on ethical issues, therefore the government offers this ‘guidance’ as training for practitioners to develop a set of principles when they deal with young children’s education. This view has also been discussed in section 3.5.1.

Moreover, on one hand in the section entitled ‘practice’, it appears as if it uses the method of didactic teaching to describe to readers (practitioners) what they ought to do; “practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued; parents and practitioners should work together...” (2000:12). On the other hand the authors presume that practitioners are at a stage in their professional and educational development to be able to put developmental theory into practice on their own or with the document’s support. As mentioned previously (see chapter three), the subject theories of children’s development were not taught in training courses. However, the document (2000:13) suggests that,

“These principles require practitioners to understand how children develop and learn during the early years”.

The training on children's development is therefore the practitioners' responsibility. As stated in the section on 'Curriculum Guidance',

"this is demonstrated when practitioners have an understanding of how children develop...; have clear knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to learning...; are aware of how children learn most effectively...".

The Foundation Stage document seems to offer free choice of action in terms of methodology and planning in a form of discovery learning by asking teachers to plan using the stimulating Early Years environment as a starting point. It is stated that, "practitioners should use a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning" (2000:17). This statement is rather obscure and imprecise as the authors request practitioners to use their own subjective understanding and initiative when they interpret the 'guidance'. To make practice effective the document uses theoretical examples, "examples that show how the principles have been put into practice in a range of different settings" (2000:12). These examples outline imaginative educational contexts and fictitious case studies which explain the theory through even more theory. There is an acknowledgement in the last page for photographic material that has been used from a number of settings but no reference to where the examples have been taken from.

The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) implies that the context for learning is based on personal and social interaction, discourse and activity. These points appear as positive statements although not explicit and are insinuated in the following:

1. "Well planned and well organised learning environment should provide the structure for teaching" (p.12). The environment stimulates action. The

rendering of verbs in the passive form, for example, 'well planned', 'well organised', involve the deletion of actors and focuses the attention of the reader on certain themes such as, the activity (planning and organisation) at the expense of others, such as, actors and methodology ('who', 'when', 'what', 'why'). Modality also operates in the utterance by the author's indication of generality when the modal auxiliary 'should', is used.

2. "Plan opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge..." (p.17), and "building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community by providing a range of opportunities..." (p.19). Action is motivated by practitioners' recognition and knowledge of children's previous experiences. These are regarded by Halliday (see chapter one) as the 'context of the situation'.
3. "Using conversation and carefully framed questions because this is crucial in developing children's knowledge" (p.23). This implies the use of discourse and questioning as contexts for learning. The role of oral communication (lecture, talk, storytelling and ritual language) within a shared here-and-now context has been illustrated by Kress in chapter one. In chapter two I referred to questioning as a dialectical method, a means of assisting performance (see Tharp and Gallimore, 1985).
4. "Children teaching each other" (p.23). This implies interactive learning. In chapter two I have elaborated upon the notion of inter-subjectivity in a child's interaction with another. (See also Halliday, Vygotsky and Luria and Bruner in chapter one.)
5. "Planning the indoor and outdoor environment... to provide positive context for learning and teaching" (p.23). This would serve to support the use of indoor and outdoor environments as contexts for learning. The idea seems to reflect Rousseau's naturalistic orientation and the progressive

education's kindergarten schools where the outdoor environment (nature and gardens) were a medium towards children's natural development; (see also, Froebel in Lilley,1967; Pestallozzi in Silber,1976; Montessori,1912).

6. "Parents have important information that supports practitioners' planning for, and work with, children" (p.24). Involvement of family. The idea of the family context offering significant support to children's education comes from the notion of child-parent relationship and stages of development in Freudian and developmental psychology. Halliday, Kress and Bruner (see chapter one) have also explored the concept of parent-child discourse in further linguistic developments.
7. "Through play, children can explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world" (p.25). Play as context for learning. This is another notion influenced by the progressive movement. Froebel in particular stated that games are not idle time wasters; they are the most important step in the development of a child and they are to be watched by the teachers as clues to how the child is developing. Likewise, the philosophy of Drama in Education and dramatic play as a medium for learning (see chapter two) is based on similar principles.

In an exploration of the notions 'learning' and 'teaching' as described in the Foundation Stage Curriculum, the authors of the document 'Curriculum Guidance' (2000:20) refer to 'learning' as,

"a rewarding and enjoyable activity in which young children explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes".

The writer-reader relationship is once again between someone telling what the case is, using generalisations, and someone (teaching staff) being told. Although the audience are trained teachers and nursery nurses who have, generally, worked with children before, the above paragraph's adjectives 'rewarding' and 'enjoyable' could leave the reader with the impression that the dictates in the paragraph serve to educate the readers on pedagogical issues. The language used expounds praxis through principle-centred theory and not through activity. Action becomes theorised and turned into idealised statements. This is also apparent in the classification of learning which follows in the form of statements and examples: "Children learn through movement and all their senses" (2000:20). The examples lack credibility as they appear to refer to fictitious case studies with no reference to settings or research that was undertaken. This is illustrated in the following: "For example, children listening to music may clap their hands, bounce up and down or sway to its rhythm" (2000:20). Other notions which illustrate the concept of 'learning' in the document are, children initiating activities; children learning from each other; children exploring ideas in depth; becoming confident learners; learning in different ways; making links in their learning; language development through creative and imaginative play (2000:20-21). It is commendable to see these activities listed in this document, but without concrete illustration and attention to pedagogical application, these exhortations to practice will remain as nothing more than vacuous concepts which in theory are saying the right thing but mean little to the practitioner who is charged with putting these ideas into practice.

4.5.1 Teacher guidance

In chapter one, I referred to Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach to learning. Vygotsky (Moll, 1990) described learning as an intellectual development which gives human form to practical activity and it is therefore interactive. In chapter two, I explored linguistic and dramatic conventions which provide context for learning based on the principles which the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' refers to. It could be claimed that, this kind of learning is implied in the documents but the application of the learning principles into practice and their subjective interpretation create conflict and insecurity amongst practitioners who request further support on teaching methods and assessment (O' Connor, 2002).

Teachers would expect that the 'Curriculum Guidance' would serve a similar purpose. A guidance which elaborates through systematic, principled and practical assistance the message systems of the Early Years curriculum. Instead, the document 'Planning for learning' (2001) which followed the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000:2) offers "examples that show how five different settings have begun to develop ways of planning that work for them, in their particular setting". However, the concept of 'teaching' is elaborated on and more clearly defined in the 'Curriculum Guidance' (2000:22) where it is stated that,

"teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt" (p.22).

The language communicates ideational meanings about people (children) and events (the teaching process) in the world of Early Years education. The theme is 'teaching', the clause is declarative and contains present tense forms such as, 'means', 'helping', 'learn', 'make connections', 'reflect'. The authors elaborate upon this definition further (2000:22) by using wordings in present tense and in declarative mode that imply processes such as, "planning", "creating", "organising", "interacting", "questioning", "responding", "observing", "assessing", "recording", "sharing" and "enabling to learn". The implication of this use of tenses and language is the need for immediate action to be taken.

The use of the verb 'means' signify the writer-reader-relationship that is, the authors' attempt to communicate the meaning of teaching to people who work in Early Years education. Meanwhile, the verbs illustrate particular roles that the practitioners are expected to play; these can be, the role of the director; the creator; the organiser; the communicator; the interrogator; the observer; the assessor; the record-keeper; the giver and taker; the enabler. These roles depict the importance of language in the social context of education (see chapters one and two) and at the same time they can provide a model to teach language in the Early Years (see teaching registers in chapter two). According to this interpretation, in all these roles, the practitioner communicates information, knowledge and experience in an Early Years setting with other people (children, staff, parents, managers, advisors, inspectors), and through the environment (learning and teaching). Further to the definition, the authors offer statements which theoretically describe the notion of "effective teaching" and examples about what 'effective teaching' is (see 2000: 22-23):

“Effective teaching requires working in partnership with parents, because parents continue to have a prime teaching role with their children. For example, while washing up, parents and children talk about the size of the bubbles and what the utensils have been used for...”.

Can the ‘Curriculum Guidance’ really guide the practitioners’ active role as indicated by the present tense of the verbs in the document? Ann O’ Connor (2002: 24) in her article about ‘leading roles and good practice’ responds that, “early years practitioners need to know how and when to intervene in children’s activities”. In the same article she also states that,

“There is considerable discussion and some disagreement about what is the right balance. What is important is that early years professionals reflect upon the way they intervene and modify it where and when necessary”.

The Foundation Stage documents fail to instruct practitioners on when and how to intervene, how to instruct pupils and how to scaffold their learning. The documents project ideas in a theoretical way and can not inspire effective learning offering practical guidance to teachers.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that because educational paradigms take a different stance on critical issues they are unable to provide balance between theory and praxis and to address issues surrounding voice, empowerment and praxis.

Ann O’ Connor (2002) further clarifies that intervention and modification in a reflective teaching and learning process are important therefore, the practitioners need to know the time (when) and the place (where) for it. This can happen “by considering the many varied roles that a practitioner must

assume" (2002:25). Lindon (2001) has identified several possible roles for an adult working in an early years setting such as, adult as play companion; as learner and observer; as admirer; as facilitator, as a model; as responsible judge; as mediator; as safety officer; as observer - learner. These roles can be assumed when the authors exemplify "what the practitioners need to do" (see 2000: 86-127) in order to address the 'stepping stones' in the Curriculum guidance.

4.5.2 Accessing the curriculum documents

However, practitioners' difficulty in accessing the curriculum documents and their request for further assistance in understanding their varied 'teaching' roles and skills required by the government (O'Connor, 2002) signifies that, the meaning-making in language use is a problematic and controversial area and needs to be reviewed. The authors of the Foundation stage documents wish to establish and maintain a system of beliefs in the field of Early Years education, as the tenor and mode of presentation of the documents signify. In terms of tenor, the authors withhold the power of knowledge, authority and expertise, by being unseen and unknown and by making use of generalisations, and at times abstract and ambiguous language. The mode is that of a text which was written as a public act in response to the mass media; it is a monologue, a lecture in which the text itself appears to be the whole of the relevant activity based on rational arguments. The producers of the Early Years curriculum documents have attempted to set up a paradigm, an interpretative framework, in the sense of a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba,1990:17) in the context of Early Years education. This paradigm is therefore incomplete. It overemphasises the ethos and principles

of early childhood education in the form of statements or 'stepping stones' (aims and objectives), and ignores methodology. Although it raises ethical issues about the world in which early years children should be educated, its practice and methodology do not assist teachers on the best means of gaining knowledge and developing skills. The government's attempt to produce more documents in order to assist teachers with the planning and implementation of the learning objectives, overwhelmed many teaching staff (O'Connor, 2002).

The Early Years curriculum acts more as a framework of abstract principles or sets of ideas in socially situated contexts rather than as a methodology, an educational model to assist teachers with planning and skills. An important issue with reference to methodology which warrants attention at this stage is this paradigm's inability to answer the question 'how do practitioners gain knowledge of the Early Years world?' In the Early Years paradigm as reflected in these curriculum documents, there is no reference to particular methodology which introduces praxis. The 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum' also alludes to the failure to address satisfactorily methodological issues related to the question 'how do we do it', such as in contexts of experiential learning; teaching and learning language; all areas of learning; how discourse and interaction between adult and learner communicate meaning; how adults scaffold children's learning experiences; what language registers adults may use in meaning-making activities; how do adults plan, assess reflect, observe children-in-action?

In a search for an answer, these issues will be explored further in the analysis of texts from the Reggio Emilia pre-schools and infant-toddler centres in Italy.

4.6 The Reggio Emilia 'project' or experiential approach to early childhood education

In the investigation of a socio-linguistic way of teaching language in Early Years, this section will examine the ethos, praxis and methodology of the Reggio Emilia pre-schools and infant-toddler centres of the region Emilia Romagna in northern Italy. The data for this part of the research is a collection of notes from a week's conference in the region of Italy and from conversations and interviews with teaching staff during my personal visit to the Reggio pre-schools. In addition, the exploration of the notion's 'ethos', 'praxis' and 'methodology' will be based on relevant literature that highlights issues about ethos, theory and practice.

4.6.1 The Reggio Emilia project

The Reggio Emilia community-based project is run by nineteen Municipal pre-schools, thirteen infant-toddler centres, three infant-toddler centres run by cooperatives and one managed by a parents' association in Reggio Emilia. These have strong links with the Municipal system and work alongside the state and private schools to provide education for ninety five per cent of the town's 3-6 year olds and thirty five per cent of the children from three months to three years.¹ The Reggio Emilia project has attracted significant global interest and received international accolade. Parents and

¹ The figures in this section are extracted from *Municipal Infant - Toddler Centres and Pre-schools of Reggio Emilia, Reggio Children, 1996.*

teaching staff of the schools, educational visitors such as, Jerome Bruner, Howard Gardner, David Hawkins and authors of books claim that, it is child-centred and committed to progressive thinking (Edwards et al, 1998). My interest in exploring the Reggio Emilia educational experience in this thesis stems from the following factors:

1. It has influenced the way individual Early Years settings in this country view and practise the new Foundation stage curriculum for Early Years such as, for example, the Coventry Education Authority, St. Thomas' centre for excellence in early childhood education in Birmingham, Bloomsbery and Brearley Nursery schools in Birmingham and the Scottish Early Years education system.
2. It is an educational system which, after the second world war, developed consistently the relationship between progressive educational philosophy and its practices, methods of school organisation and principles of environmental design.
3. It is a socio-constructivist model influenced by the theory of Lev Vygotsky (Moll, 1990) which states that children (and adults) co-construct their theories and knowledge through the relationships they build with other people and the surrounding environment (see chapter one).
4. It draws overtly on the work of various past and present pedagogues such as, Freire, Frenet, Montessori, Dewey, Piaget and Bruner who, in this thesis, have also contributed to the construction of an understanding about teaching and learning in a social context (see chapters one and three).
5. It promotes an image of the child as a capable participant in his/her own learning which has been demonstrated through Drama in Education in chapter two and through the social theories of language in chapter one.

6. It is a model where play and the expressive arts have been offered a central place in learning and may therefore, practically, illustrate more reasons for using Drama in Education in the Early Years in Britain.
7. It is a model that demonstrates how the child is educated in a social context through a strong relationship between school and community.
8. Finally, it is a model which views and practises language as a symbolic means of many representations of the world. As Malaguzzi (1984 :20-22) founder of the Reggio schools stated, “the child is made of one hundred languages... of hundreds of subjective and objective experiences”. This approach to language could assist my investigation for the development of language through drama in Early Years.

4.6.2 Educational and pedagogical ethos

The ethos of the Reggio Emilia system will be examined in a similar way as the English Foundation Stage Curriculum. This exploration is based on the following criteria:

1. The holistic and Living Curriculum as defined in chapters one and two which forms the context for the interpretation of the texts.
2. The social identity of the English Foundation Stage documents (1999, 2000, and 2001) in the interpretation of texts as authentic material.
3. The way in which discourse in texts affects the relationship between the functions of the language - ideational, interpersonal, textual (see chapter one), and the social structures (knowledge, beliefs, social relationships and social identities).

Elena Gardini, a pedagogue in the Reggio schools, stated in her speech (Conference in Italy: October, 2000) that, “we do not talk about a method or a model, we are talking about values; how do we motivate children, how do we prevent segmentation”. I will firstly examine the notion of ‘ethos’ in the educational provision of the Reggio schools in relation to the social context. This concept is not hidden in documents (original or translations) or in interviews, instead, it is explicit and highlighted in the five following areas:

1. Theory and practice as directly linked with the history and culture of the country and the particularities of the region.
2. The consideration of the notion of the whole child in every aspect of the educational provision such as, teaching, learning, observing, assessing, documenting and reporting.
3. Families and communities as models for the children’s education.
4. The architecture of the buildings, classrooms and the environment.
5. Children’s education through the arts.

1. History and Culture

This will be examined in the following:

1. Aspects of a translated interview with the founder of the schools Loris Malaguzzi by Lella Gandini, Professor of School of Education, University of Massachusetts (Edwards et al., 1998:49-96).
2. In personal documents such as, notes from the “Hundred Languages of Children”, an International Conference which took place in Coventry in September 2000.

The first school for young children was built and run by women and parents in the spring of 1945 after the end of the Second world war. Malaguzzi, a young teacher at a stage of transition in his professional career happened to be in the area when the construction of the schools began and was invited to go and work there. In order to run the schools the women and parents, as Malaguzzi states in the interview said that,

“We will find the money... they will come from the sale of an abandoned war tank, a few trucks, and some horses left behind by the retreating Germans.... We will build the school on our own, working at night and on Sundays. The land has been donated by a farmer; the bricks and beams will be salvaged from bombed houses; the sand will come from the river; the work will be volunteered by all of us” (Edwards et al., 1998: 50).

The text is enriched with symbolism. I will explain certain semantic features of the text (field, tenor and mode of discourse) by referring to some experiential features of the situation. The manipulation of objects (the making of the schools) is clearly expressed in the language through the types of processes that are being talked about. These are all processes of either existence and possession (the sale of an abandoned war tank, a few trucks, some horses), movement and location (the land, the bricks and beams, the river) or power (the work will be volunteered by all of us). The subject positions which are specified in the text following this quote are “men, women, young people, farmers and workers who had survived a hundred war horrors” take responsibility over their actions, and the making of the schools is not an imposed process but it is conducted by personal initiative, determination, and a strong will (‘will find the money, will come from, will

build, will be salvaged, will be volunteered'). The verbs express action, the clauses are declarative and imperative and they are connected by the use of the personal pronoun 'we' which has collective meaning.

There are particular names of objects involved in the context of the situation. These include, for example, things like war tank, trunk, horses, school, bricks, beams, houses, money and accompanying features including the identifying term 'bombed'. These objects are the means, the tools for the construction of the new. There are past events recalled by Malaguzzi in the description of the construction of the new.

If I consider the tenor, the personal relationships involved, a similar type of systematic relationship is expressed between the categories of the situation on the one hand and those of the text on the other. The course of action is determined by the people involved in the creation of the schools; they are the ones who are carrying the action forward. They announce their own intentions. And these are expressed through the first-person imperative, 'we will'. The statements in the quote show that people share their actions with others (Malaguzzi was invited to go and work with them) giving them the chance to form a dialogue with the hidden function of agreeing, asking and contradicting.

In terms of the mode, the spontaneous speech of the discourse, the language is pragmatic and task oriented. This is reflected in the use of nouns as objects of the situation (tank, trucks, horses). The theme structure, the way that the text is furthering the actions of the people is seen in the thematic structure of the clauses. The ideological potential of the discourse is expressed in the use of the metaphor. The construction of the new from the

old. The school as a symbol of a new beginning, new life built in spring from the remainings of a war. The idea is communicated through symbols. The river as a symbol of continuation and communication.

The influence of Hegel's (Boguslavsky et al., 1975:64) dialectics "all things are in a state of perpetual motion", and Vygotsky's (1978) notion of 'activity' and 'action' as perpetual and mechanical motion (see chapter one) is the potential hidden meaning of the metaphor and an advocate for the ethos and the future of Early Years education. In a cultural, political and social level, the process of personal and social transformation which Italy experienced after the war led to the establishment of an autonomous sub-field (see Bourdieu, 1998), the Emilia Romagna region, which gained its own symbolic and economic power throughout the years in education and capital. A reflection of the ethos of the Reggio schools is also illustrated in the quote that follows. In Edwards et al (1998:297) Nimmo states that,

" the idea of schools as a system of relationships in Reggio Emilia is captured in a phrase reflective of the region's social traditions: *lo chi siamo*, "I am who we are" refers to the possibility of reaching beyond the individual through mutual exchange with others".

This indicates that the schools in the community share the same conception of education based on collaboration, care and mutual interaction. As these schools are centres of pre-school education, the quote assists a further interpretation on how the community views children, that is, children from their very beginning are active contributors to the life of the community.

Solidarity is a key feature in the community which also guides the teachers' steps in the young children's education. This is perhaps related to the tradition of this part of Italy where the co-operatives and the people's joint efforts created and supported this educational system. Therefore, collaboration and communication about the children's achievements with all the agents involved in their education is an important factor.

2. The whole child

In the Reggio Emilia schools (Study tour, 2000) planning appears to be a method of work that establishes in advance general educational objectives and assists teachers to lay them out but does not formulate the specific goals for each project or each activity in advance. Instead teachers formulate hypotheses and objectives that are flexible and adapted to the needs and interests of the children. In Edwards et al (1998:113) Carlina Rinaldi, pedagogical director of the Reggio Emilia schools stated that,

“these interests and needs include those expressed by children at any time during the project as well as those the teachers infer and bring out as the work proceeds”.

The child retains the role of a protagonist in the contextual teaching and learning processes. These are created through meaningful interactions with children and families in actual and immediate situations (Study tour, 2000). In chapter one, I referred to the concept of situational meaning in which according to Halliday (1978) “the situation is the medium through which the text lives and breathes”. Moreover, in chapter two, I explored how in Drama in Education children are facilitated to explore meanings and concepts at a level related to their own needs. Similarly, the educators of the Reggio Emilia schools indicate that “the processes of ‘unpacking in a supermarket’ or

defamiliarising everyday objects and events can be deeply meaningful, interesting, and instructive to them” (Edwards et al., 1998:33).

Furthermore, the image of the child is fundamental in the processes of teaching and learning. The children’s language, the ways they co-operate, their drawings and writings, their stage of development shapes the Curriculum. Rinaldi (Edwards et al.1998:114) states that,

“the emphasis is placed on seeing children as unique individuals with rights rather than simply needs. They have potential, plasticity, openness, the desire to grow, curiosity, a sense of wonder, and the desire to relate to other people and to communicate”.

These ideas are reflected in the practice. The child’s potentials are expressed and achieved within a group learning context. The context of individual and group situations inspires the preparation of the classroom, the materials and the methods which guide teachers’ observations and documentation. In staff meetings children’s interaction and communication with the environment acquires an essential place in teachers’ reflections and the creation of hypotheses which will guide further observations (Study tour, 2000).

Previously, in the Foundation Stage document (2000) there was an extensive reference to the notion of the child with needs. Statements for teachers aimed to offer ways to meet these needs. However, the child is viewed in an abstract sense and the statements offer information in the form of examples which are unable to generate teachers’ processes of thinking with regard to

theories of children's development and methods of applying theory to practice.

The following verse comes from a poem written by Loris Malaguzzi, and apart from the fact that it decorates the entrances of the Reggio pre-schools and infant-toddler centres; it also signifies the ethos of a child-centred educational provision.

“The child...
Is made of one hundred.
The child has a hundred languages
A hundred hands
A hundred thoughts
A hundred ways of thinking
Of playing, of speaking....”

The verse illustrates the image of the child in the Reggio schools and the practitioners' holistic view in relation to Early Years education. In the verse, the repetition of the words 'a hundred' aims to intensify the community's belief in the holistic development of children through various and different ways with which children explore the world and learn about it. In the Reggio schools, pedagogues, teachers and artists promote children's education through the development of all their languages, expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative and relational (see Catalogue of the exhibit, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 1996).

During the Conference (September, 2000) the pedagogue Deanna Margini stated that,

“The image we have about early childhood is optimistic; what the children can, and not what they can not do. I will use the

metaphor of a glass to describe childhood; it is half full and not half empty. Children are competent from birth, children are biologically prepared and are the bearers of rights; the right to communicate. They are the developers of strategies and relationships of cause and effect. Children's actions are extraordinarily communicative. Children have grown to relate with their peers in a symmetric way. They are able to enter and be in harmony with other human beings”.

Similarly, in the first chapter of the thesis, Gee (1999) described ways of children's learning as language-in-action. That is language used with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and ways of thinking, valuing, feeling and believing. In the same chapter, I illustrated Halliday's (1989) concept of language as zones of meaning potential in children's representation of life experiences. I elaborated Vygotsky's (Wertsch, 1991) types of speech functions which indicate different levels of communication with particular reference to children's verbal language developments. Finally, Bruner's (1974) socio-cognitive approach to Early language describes language as a system of enactive, iconic and symbolic representations. These views address the ethos of education around the image of the child in a similar way to the Reggio Emilia approach and reveal education and language as a child-centred notion.

3. The involvement of families and the community

Families are involved in the actual planning, the development of contexts for learning and the organisation of the child-centred Curriculum (Study tour, 2000). In her speech (Conference: September, 2000) Deanna Margini stated that, "the focus on the potential of the child does not mean replacing the mother/carer. We support the continuous dialogue with the parents". In Edwards et al (1998:131) Filippini, a pedagogue in the Reggio schools states that, "educational continuity between the school and home is a dialectic process, based on talking and listening". This verifies that in the Reggio schools the philosophy of education is founded on the central importance of participation and interaction at every level: both within the school (between children and between children and adults), and also between the school and the community. Historically, parents formed the main body which created and ran the schools. Parental participation in advisory councils and the system of community-based management evolved and changed over time. In Edwards et al. (1998:131), Filippini states that,

"Parent participation serves educational, political and public policy goals. Today, with so many parents suffering the stress and malaise of contemporary life, we think that this participation can help promote a new community ethic based on sharing experiences and ways of being".

Participation, collectivity and co-operation are key ideas in the life of the Reggio Emilia community and of the area Emilia - Romagna in general. In Bourdieu's terminology (1993), there is a shift of power, a bottom-up model rather than top-down in relation to the social structure. In economic terms this is depicted in the continued presence of economically viable agricultural

and industrial co-operatives. Politically, the Communist Parties offer significant support, and at a social level there is a strong 'group culture'. The piazza, the square, is a key meeting point in the city, the cultural and symbolic value of which is reflected in the architecture of the schools and in learning. It is a point of discourse and communication. During my study tour to the Reggio schools (October, 2000), I experienced the importance of the meeting places where men and women stand and talk on their way to the market, where large groups of young people discuss and exchange ideas. Discussion is very much part of the Italian way of life and this idea is also encouraged in the schools where the entrance of the school buildings represents the piazza and the first meeting point of the day. This is where parents and teachers, children and children meet and talk; teachers and children discuss news, negotiate the content of learning and make plans for the day (Study Tour, October 2000). The pedagogical reasons for the nurturing of parent-school relationships is exemplified in Rinaldi's words (Fontanesi, G., 1998) as follows:

"Participation is part of a common identity, a 'we' that we give life to through participation".

The reciprocal relationship that exists between child, family, school and community is not just a 'link', as the English Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) states, between school and home but families together with the children and the teachers, are the school (see Valentine, 1998). In relation to social structure and power, the involvement of the community in the re-structure of the society after the war can be seen as a political, an economical and a revolutionary break of the status quo in the Italian region. The change of power relations within the cultural field (see Bourdieu, 1998),

strengthened the dominated part of society (workers, ordinary women and men and a few academics) and produced a shift of power in the social structure (a bottom-up model rather than a top-down). It did not only manage to survive the political and economic changes in Italy and the rest of the world throughout the years, it did not become marginalised under the name 'progressive education' but it established educational respect in both the mainstream and the progressive sector and became a recognised model leading by example, the pre-school educational provision in some European countries (such as Britain and Greece) and in the United States.

4. The environment

The notion of environment here signifies the space where teaching and learning take place as well as the architecture of the buildings where the social constructivist and interactionist theoretical frameworks guide the teachers' work with both adults and children in the Reggio Emilia schools.

The main source of information about the environment in this section comes from a 'professional' document, the catalogue of the exhibit 'The Hundred Languages of Children' (2000), first published for practitioners in the field of Early Childhood education in 1996. Further information comes from administrative documents such as minutes of meetings with staff in the pre-school centres as well as from personal documents such as a diary and notes from the Conference during my Study tour to the Reggio schools in October 2000.

The teachers' narrative, in their presentations to the United Kingdom team during our visit to the schools (Study tour: October, 2000), clearly stated that, "the environment changes according to the children's requests and development. This change is not static, it is constant. Constant change and

transformation of the environment that takes into consideration those changes". The content of the statement links with the meaning of the river, as referred to earlier in this section: the metaphor for communication and continuation. The school is a place where relationships, exchanges and discourse take place. This idea brings up Bakhtin's notion of 'dialogism' (see Dentith, 1995). Language as a continuous generative process implemented in the social verbal interaction of the speakers. The teachers of the schools said that, "the main features of the centres are the circularities, the central piazza area, the atelier and the outside environment. These features form a continuity between the indoor and the outdoor environment, to be able to circulate, to walk everywhere. For us a school is a system of communication. Each part of that system is conceived in a reciprocal relationship with the other part" (Study tour, October, 2000).

In addition, in the Catalogue of the 1995 International exhibition of the Reggio schools, Malaguzzi stated that,

"we place enormous value on the role of the environment as a motivating and animating force in creating spaces for relations, options, and emotional and cognitive situations that produce a sense of well being and security. It has been said that the environment should act as a kind of aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it. This is what we are working toward".

This sentiment is similar to the philosophy and ideas described by Dentith (1995:142) when he explains how social intercourse stems from verbal communication and interaction. The behavioural genres, as facts of the social milieu as they develop in conversations when a random assortment of

people gathers. As R. Sor, a Russian linguist stated (Dentith, 1995: 143), “language is not an individual activity (energeia) but a cultural-historical legacy of mankind (ergon)”. The Reggio Emilia educators value and encourage a similar kind of cultural environment as a space of “motivating and animating forces” (energeia) for the production of “well-being and security” (ergon) (Edwards et al., 1998:164).

4.6.3 Educational praxis

In this section I aim to identify essential principles that constitute a holistic and living curriculum as described in Table 1 and are revealed from the discussion about the Reggio schools. Key questions include: how are these principles practised to meet aims and objectives in the project work? How is theory related to practice? The analysis will be based on information provided in personal notes taken during the project presentations, as well as from speeches during the Conference and during visits to schools. These will be enriched with bibliographical information.

The ‘project work’ was one of the main features of the Progressive movement spurred by Dewey and his colleagues in the early twentieth century. In the United States the project method had been introduced in 1924 by Rawcliffe under the title ‘Practical Problem project’ and was adopted by many Americans under the name ‘open education’ at that time (see Edwards et al, 1998). In Britain, some excellent project work was described by Susan Isaacs (1930, 1933) in the 1930s and 1940s and was widely used during the ‘Plowden Years in the 1960’s and ‘70s. The structure and the development of the sessions in Drama in Education (see chapter 2) also constitutes project work in this sense. In the Reggio schools the work of the projects provides

ample texts, pretexts, and contexts for extensive conversations between the adults and the children, as well as among them. Edwards et al (1998:28) state that,

“In the course of a project, for example, on a topic such as ‘what happens at the supermarket?’ or ‘how houses are built’, children explore the phenomena first-hand and in detail over an extended period of time. The activities of children include direct observation, asking questions of relevant participants and experts, collecting pertinent artefacts, and representing observations, ideas, memories, feelings, imaginings, and new understandings in a wide variety of ways including dramatic play”.

The practice in Drama in Education is similar to the practice in the Reggio Emilia schools. The teachers collect significant information through research, observations and meetings to create contexts for learning, to reflect, interpret and verify the information. These skills also guide the children's work. The Reggio approach may raise issues about educational systems in our contemporary world. How and why romantic and idealistic belief systems which favour human nature such as, the Reggio schools have developed, expanded and influenced material and economic educational systems of the westernised world? How did this system manage to survive over decades throughout many different cultural and social changes? Perhaps, in a dialectical process of education materialism and idealism (see chapter one) could benefit from each other in the sense that they can enrich theory with ideology (ethos) and praxis with ideology when it is missing, give rise to new

activities, new ideas and therefore to changed circumstances and changed people.

Reggio teachers emphasise the initial phase as the most essential part of project work. Drama teachers also view the first meetings with a group as the most significant ones in the Dramatic process because the class will choose the content of the topic, "something that really matters" (Bolton, 1992:65). Similar to practice in Drama in Education, the initial phase of project work in Reggio schools assists the teachers when they assess the children's knowledge and interests. The next step is the interpretation of the information which opens up the contexts for learning. Lilian Katz (Edwards et al, 1998:27) states that,

"The Reggio children are involved in "long-term investigation projects... of particular topics". Children are encouraged to make their own decisions usually in co-operation with their peers and in consultation with their teachers about the work to be undertaken. "

This idea describes a particular method of teaching, the 'Mantle of the Expert' technique, which works on the basis of "teacher and class belonging to the same fictitious organisation", an enterprise (Bolton, 1992:46).

An example of learning language in context, as part of the 'project work', is what the pedagogues of the Reggio Emilia call "graphic languages" (see Edwards et al., 1998: 28) such as drawings and paintings, making group murals and sculptures. 'Graphic languages' is also a means for further exploration and deepening knowledge of the topic. The high level of competence with the Reggio children is demonstrated by the extensiveness

of early experiences of expressing and communicating their ideas and observations graphically during the pre-school years. This kind of work introduces ways which develop the children's full potential. Children revisit first hand experiences and with the use of visual media they record and represent their ideas, memories, predictions, hypotheses, feelings and observations, explore their understandings, reconstruct previous experiences and revisit the phenomena under investigation. In a similar way, learning, as explored in chapter two through Drama in Education, is a participatory and a meaning-making process. In Drama in Education children are not passive recipients. In Neelands (1984:2) children are,

"Active meaning-makers who have already made considerable learning progress in their immediate environment before they ever come into classrooms. This early learning has been characterised by sensual and practical involvement with the world".

4.6.4 The influence of the Reggio system

At present, the Reggio achievements influence the United States and Britain more than other European countries which have attempted adaptations of the approach. In the case of adapting the system in Britain, it is important to consider whether it can be made suitable to its context and if it can be adjusted to fit its situations, cultures and conditions. The use of the atelierista (an artist specialised in visual media such as, clay, painting, sculpture) in the Reggio schools connects with the history and tradition of the country. Italy's contributions to the arts (in literature, theatre, architecture, music, painting, sculpture and most contemporary, in cinema) are unparalleled. The period of

the Italian Renaissance stands as one of the greatest eras of artistic achievement in the history of the West. From the 13th to the 16th century it became the cultural centre of the Western world. The great names of Giotto, Donatello, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael in Italian visual arts and architecture had an immense impact on the heritage of Roman civilisation which lasted well into the 20th century. Therefore some of the innovations in the Reggio Emilia region such as, the use of the visual arts as a teaching tool in the contemporary progressive schools resonate the cultural and historical influences as well as the people's consistency in educational initiatives which promote expression and thinking skills, as the post war period for change introduced.

However, in the British schools, Drama in Education could be more relevant to the cultural and historical context of the country. As described in chapter two, in Drama in Education the conventions which facilitate the learning process have their roots in Drama and Theatre. The country's long tradition in Theatre (Shakespearean and Elizabethan) as well as influences from the Theatre around the world has inspired the British pioneers of Drama in Education to use it as a learning tool, a playful mode of exploration and investigation for the motivation of children's education.

Moreover, most of the 'project work' that takes place in the Reggio schools evolves through graphic representations, drawings, paintings, clay work and three dimensional constructions. This became obvious in both settings, during the Conference's presentations of the children's work as well as in the time that the Conference delegates were able to observe the teaching process in some of the schools. The Art room is a dominant space in the school buildings; some of the schools have a separate studio for music

improvisations, and role play seems to take place in corridors or in specifically designated corners. During my observations in the schools I witnessed a number of focused activities taking place in the Art rooms and in the classrooms but I observed that for more than half an hour there was no adult assistance for the learning that was taking place in the music room and in the role play corner (Field notes: Study tour, October, 2000).

Visual and graphic languages seem to provide ways of exploring and expressing understandings of the world that are easily available to most pre-schoolers. In the Reggio schools, the visual arts are integrated into the work simply as additional languages available to young children not yet very competent in conventional writing and reading; the arts are not taught as a subject, a discipline, a discrete set of skills, or treated in other ways as a focus for instruction for their own sake.

In the collaborative process of children's education the roles of the pedagogue and the atelierista are significant. Each role, parent, cook, teacher, pedagogue, atelierista, draws from and at the same time contributes to the shape of the overall educational process. The pedagogues (pedagogistas) are the generators of information. They facilitate interpersonal connections and consider both the overall ideas and the details. In Edwards et al. (1998:128) the pedagoga Filippini describes the role of the pedagoga stating that,

“we must guarantee the coherence and consistency... of the municipal educational program serving children under 6. We must integrate and co-ordinate the administrative, technical, pedagogical, social, and political components of our system”.

However, it seems difficult to consider a similar role in the educational system of Britain where the major pedagogical movements which shaped education and theories of children's development have been hardly mentioned in teacher training courses. In the British schools, it would be considered an ideal option if Early Years co-ordinators would be able to deliver in-service training to enhance parents' and teachers' thinking on child development issues related to everyday practice together with their administrative and teaching duties. The case of the advisors from the local education authorities who may occasionally visit the schools to assist the ongoing educational practice, counts as outside agencies who are usually expensive for the schools to hire. In Reggio Emilia the pedagogical practices seem to be almost entirely dependent on the in-service staff development component of their approach. The number of 'pedagogists' is sufficient to know every teacher and every family well and to make them constantly available.

Similar to the way in which Drama in Education views the teacher, sometimes teachers in Reggio Emilia undertake a project on a topic of unpredictable or uncertain value as part of their commitment to experimentation, and to exploring together with the children what kinds of experiences and ideas might emerge from an experiment. This approach serves to address Bruner's studies (1980) with pre-school children which showed that very often the content of teacher-child relationship seems focused on the routines and the rules of classroom life, especially during informal activity periods. Usually the content of relationship between teacher-child is about the child's conduct and level of performance or the children's

performance on academic tasks. In contrast, the Reggio Emilia practices and teacher-child relationships have a content of mutual interest or concern that can provide pretexts and texts for the interaction between them. This is a practice which is also emphasised in Drama in Education (see chapter two).

4.6.5 Assessment in Reggio schools

Children's drawings become living significant material for exploration with the teachers' documentation of what the children said about what they observed and experienced. The children's recorded comments and discussions provide teachers with knowledge of the children's levels of understanding and misunderstanding of the everyday phenomena. It is also a form of assessment. Documentation is a standard part of classroom practice:

1. It contributes to the extensiveness and depth of the learning gained by the children from their projects and other work.

2. Parents become acutely aware of their children's experience in the school.

As Malaguzzi (Edwards et al., 1998:49) puts it, "documentation introduces parents to a quality of knowing that tangibly changes their expectations".

They re-examine their assumptions about their parenting roles and their views about the experience their children are living and take a new and more inquisitive approach toward the whole school experience.

Alongside the children's work are photographs of the children at work. Transcriptions of their questions and the comments made in the course of their work are also displayed. This helps strengthen the involvement of parents in the children's learning, provides a rich basis for parent-child

discussion, and deepens parents' understanding of the nature of learning in the early years.

3. Documentation is an important kind of teacher research, sharpening and focusing teachers' attention on the intentions and understandings of the children as well as their own role in children's experiences.

4. It provides information about children's learning and progress that cannot be demonstrated by the formal standardised tests and checklists.

4.7 Educational methodology

It is not possible to enrich this section of the thesis with first hand experiences about structured ways of working with children in the Reggio schools. This is due to language barriers and the fact that the visitors were not allowed to video or use photographic equipment in any part of the study tour for the protection of local copyright. However, the teachers of the Reggio schools in their presentation of the schools' principles (Research Journal, Study Tour, 2000) described the value of subjectivity as a holistic value, viewed in terms of wholeness and integrity:

"The methodological implications of this value of subjectivity can be seen in our daily strategies: observation and documentation, small group work, the organisation of the space, the presence of mini ateliers and so on". (Research Journal, Oct 21st 2000)

They also referred to the term 'intervention' instead of teaching, the use of ZOPD as a device and the 'scaffolding' process during teacher intervention. Children are given directions and guidance in the use of the tools, materials, and techniques of graphic and visual representation. Of considerable interest

is the way such teaching invariably includes giving the child, in simple form, the principle underlying a suggested technique or approach to materials. The inclusion of the principle within a suggestion increases the chances that the child will be able to solve the problem when the adult is not there and an appropriate goal for teaching at every level.

'Scaffolding' for the Reggio teachers means taking the time to closely observe, listen, and engage in dialogue with the children. In this way, they enter the child's world without disrupting or diverting the flow of a child's work or intentions. If the children ask the teacher-observer about what he/she is doing, the teacher can honestly share his/her observations with the children. As a result, the children may become involved in talking with the teacher not only about what they did but also about the effect of their actions. This can be an opportunity for the children to become reflective about their experiences.

4.8 The Coventry Education Service Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage

The Curriculum Framework was produced and published by Coventry Education Support and Advisory Service in May 2000, a few months before the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) was due to be formally implemented at a national level by Nursery schools and Early Years centres in this country.

I will explore this document through textual analysis for the following reasons:

1. Although it is not stated in the actual document, the authors who had visited or were familiar with the Reggio Emilia practice acknowledged the

fact that the Italian system had inspired them in the production of the document (Interview, 16th September 2000).

2. The ambiguity of the Foundation Stage Curriculum framework became obvious for teaching staff in schools and settings since the implementation of the Early Learning Goals (1999). Consequently, many local education authorities began to produce training material in order to assist teaching staff with the understanding, planning and implementation of the learning goals for the Foundation stage. Coventry Support and Advisory Service was one of the first local educational authorities that took the initiative to interpret the Foundation Stage document (2000) for teaching purposes.
3. When I viewed the three models as a continuum (see 4.1), I suggested that the Coventry document could be placed in the middle of this continuum between the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the Reggio Emilia. This is because, for the purpose of this study, the direct application of the Reggio Emilia model to the cultural domain of the British society in Early Years education would not be possible. Therefore, the Coventry document proposes ways to facilitate the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) and the Early learning goals (1999) in the cultural context of the British educational system.
4. Whilst the authors have been driven by the principles of the Reggio Emilia schools, the document explores child-centred educational tools to deliver the Foundation Stage Curriculum relevant to the cultural context of the British Early Years educational system. This may also further assist this study when a model to explore the curriculum's Early Learning goals will be proposed in the fifth chapter.
5. Although other progressive initiatives have since been taken place at a more practical level (see Research, Development and Training for under

5's and their families, Pen Green Centre: 2001-2002), the Coventry document explores the early learning goals in the learning context of well - structured stories, a topic which will be explored further in chapter five. This idea seems to allow space for the exploration of the different kinds of meaning-making that children engage in drama process (see chapter two). Therefore it may facilitate my proposal in chapter five for a model to teach language in the Foundation stage curriculum through Drama.

The analysis of texts in this section aims to follow the same structural principles as the two previous documents. I will examine the ethos, praxis and methodology of the Coventry document against the socio-linguistic theoretical framework derived from chapters one and two. The data in this section will derive from the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage ring binder (May,2000) which is a policy document produced within the Support and Advisory Service local authority and from personal notes during a day's course when this material was introduced.

One of the first observations to be made about the ring-binder at text level is that, unlike the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage document where there is no clear indication of its authorship, the Coventry document informs the readers at a glance. The front cover features the logos and names of the Coventry Support and Advisory Service (at the top), and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (at the bottom). There are also photographs of children engaged in play activities which implies that the authors support the idea that play is the context for learning.

4.8.1 The ethos of the Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage

In this section I shall highlight how discourse acts as social practice in the inception, development and ethos of Early Years in the Foundation stage as will be demonstrated in the relevant texts. In this exploration, reference to the Curriculum Guidance (2000) and the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage (1999) will be inevitable as the authors view these documents not only as a point of reference but also as a guide for educational action. But more immediately, I need to explore the relationship between discourse, power and ideology which is at the centre of the social practice of discourse in the pedagogical ethos of the Curriculum Framework for the Foundation stage (Coventry, 2000).

As stated in 4.5 the Curriculum Guidance (2000) and the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage (1999) express a kind of political power and control over the teachers for the following reasons:

- 1) the educational principles as stated in the documents do not represent a wide spectrum of the Early Years educational society;
- 2) no reference has been made to any research that has been undertaken prior to its implementation;
- 3) the fragmented delivery of the documents in schools prevented teaching staff from a comprehensive understanding of a holistic theory and practice;
- 4) the recognition of the Reception year as part of the Foundation stage which for the first time in this country had formally extended the duration of early childhood education to five years of age instead of four, alienated Reception teaching staff in schools from their role and responsibilities as

no training had been offered by the government to familiarise them with the new expectations;

- 5) the ambiguous, theoretical, rhetorical and generalised language used by the authors in the 'Stepping Stones' (1999) and the 'Early Learning Goals' (1999) confused and detached teaching staff from the new meaning of Early Years education which was expected to introduce a new view about the child, educational practises and teaching methodologies.

These key points address the pedagogical ethos of the 'Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage' (2000) and they are selected principles of the government's document and their practical application as demonstrated in the medium and short term planning which I will refer to in the discourse of praxis and methodology. In the foreword of the Coventry document (2000) it is stated that,

"There is recognition that for the first time this very important stage of education is given 'a distinct identity with its own curriculum and learning goals' ".

The authors have selectively adopted a set of principles from the Government document to demonstrate their beliefs. This may offer the opportunity for an interpretation in two ways. In one sense, the principles of the Foundation stage curriculum are determined by social conditions, more specifically by the nature of the relationship between the Government, the state power, and the producers of the Coventry document who are members of the 'public' in our society, and indeed they are part of that relationship. The local education authority of Coventry, for example, is responsible for most of what goes on in schools but adopts the Government's policies. This is partly explained in terms of power. Institutions with less power, such as local

education authorities, school governors and senior teachers see their interests as tied in with more powerful bodies. In addition, the government uses ideological power which is exercised in the documents' discourse and this is the power to project its practices as universal and 'common sense'. Consequently, this is an expression of economic and political power, it is therefore of particular importance here because it may signify that the Coventry local education authority was coerced to go along with the government and submit its ideas to the Government's exercise of power.

In another sense, the Coventry document could be interpreted as the local education authority's effort to balance the demands between the state economic and political power and the framework for thinking about and doing something about educational change. This idea may illustrate Fullan's (1991:27) questioning when he highlights the problem of meaning and its consequences in educational change: "What values are involved? Which areas of potential change are being neglected?" As mentioned in 4.5 the Early Learning Goals and the Foundation Stage are in line with the objectives for teaching literacy and mathematics and at the same time appear to support a child-centred education by offering a balanced curriculum in all six areas of learning. This may show that innovations get generated through a mixture of political and educational changes. Perhaps this is what the authors of the Coventry document mean when they choose to repeat in the foreword of the ring-binder, the Government's wording "for the first time this very important stage of education is given a distinct identity with its own curriculum and learning goals".

If the Coventry document is viewed as a mediator between the kind of curriculum innovations directed at cognitive and academic goals rather than personal and social development goals and a curriculum initiated by the needs of our changing society then, Sarason (1990) and Fullan's (1991) thinking about politically motivated change as accompanied by greater commitment of leaders may find its expression in Early Years education. In addition, the document bears the signatures of the authors Ann Nelson and Barbara Thomas who acknowledge by their names and working establishments their co-author colleagues. It is stated that,

"We have been supported by early years practitioners, colleagues from the Advisory service and from agencies represented in the Early Years development and Childcare Partnership. We are grateful for this support and recognise that the outcome has been greatly enhanced by the team work which has been involved".

The team work in the production of the document is declared by the use of wording such as, 'team work', 'support' and the pronoun 'we'.

Since the document's principles state the government's expectations for Early Years, the only personalised aim which signifies the authors' intentions is stated in the foreword as follows:

"Our aim has been to devise a framework which allows and encourages practitioners to contribute their own ideas and to develop their own curriculum in the context of their own setting".

Even though the authors expressed their beliefs emphasising child-centred education and the parents' involvement in children's education (Coventry

Conference, May 2000), their views are not directly stated in the document. In an examination of the ethos as values adopted from the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' (2000), the selected principles have been taken for granted and do not guide or enlighten the reader with further educational theory. In other words, these selected key principles are not explored by the authors of the document. Meanwhile, the principles and the authors' personal views can be indirectly seen in the planning documents that follow. The Framework appears to be an interpretation of the Foundation stage Curriculum as drawn from the authors' personal and professional experiences and attempts to apply theory to practice.

In the following section I will examine how the praxis and methodology of the Coventry document explore the principles of the 'Foundation Stage Curriculum' document.

4.8.2 Educational praxis and methodology

Even though the writers' identity (own observations of the social world and principles for Early Years education) is not overtly demonstrated in the section about the ethos of the Coventry document, their beliefs and experiences seem to be depicted in the relationship between praxis and methodology. This is why praxis and methodology will not be examined in this section of the thesis as separate units of study but in their relationship. In a sense, the Coventry document is a paradigm because it is an interpretative framework as its title indicates (Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage). This is perhaps why action is not guided by the writers' "basic set of beliefs" (see Guba, 1990:17) but by the principles for the Foundation stage

education as set by the Government. It is also a team research project, an interpretative paradigm, guided by a set of beliefs about Early Years education, how it should be understood, studied and elaborated by teaching staff (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:19). In the introduction of the document it is stated that,

“Curriculum planning is carried out by different individuals and groups of staff at different levels - long, medium and short term planning”.

According to Gubrium and Holstein's (1997) analysis of interpretative practice, what perhaps the authors of the Coventry document wish to accomplish is to draw the readers' attention to interpretative procedures and practices that give structure and meaning to children's everyday experiences in Early Years settings. The authors describe the purpose of the 'long term planning' as follows:

“It is set in the context of the aims and the policies of the setting. Everyone concerned with the setting will be involved at different times in this stage”.

In the first clause the nouns 'aims' and 'policies' signify that ideology and ethos should inspire planning and that these should spring from each Early Years setting and not from the document. The auxiliary verb 'will' in the clause that follows declares the participation of every member of the setting in this form of planning as imperative. This remark implies that Early Years settings have full responsibility over the conception and development of ethos and planning, and that the document's purpose is not to set up a different set of principles from the Foundation stage Curriculum (2000) but to enhance its aims as stated in the foreword. In terms of power relations the

social dynamics seem to be positioned as a bottom - up rather than top - down structure and in a similar way to the Reggio Emilia model.

According to Bourdieu's (1993) interpretation of power relations in the construction of space of positions and position-takings, Early Years education can be seen as a space of different social agents such as, politicians, educators, school managers, governors, parents and children, involved in the field but also of political acts or educational positions that determine the field. The authors of the Coventry document may take different positions in the field, they may agree with the Government's principles for Early Years education or claim that settings should create their own principles. Whichever position they take in their struggle to defend or improve Early Years education and teachers' understanding, their strategies in planning and methodology will depend on the other agents' position in the field, the value that the receivers (educators, managers, governors, parents and maybe children) will place in the Foundation Stage principles and other changes in the field within which the receivers are situated. Therefore, the Coventry document implies that praxis and methodology in the Early Years should be dependent on the social and cultural needs of the setting.

In the planning process the authors suggest the conventional framework which most schools in Britain are familiar with, the long, short and medium term planning. The document states that long term planning is a key stage or year group plan and at this level the participants should be the Head teacher, the leader, all staff, governors and managers. The purposes of the long term planning as identified by the authors are the following:

“To ensure coverage of all aspects of the curriculum across the key stage; progression in all aspects of the curriculum across the key stage; balance within and across all aspects of the curriculum; coherence within and between all aspects of the curriculum; continuity between key stages” (Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage, 2000:5).

Here, the authors indicate that the key concepts in long term planning are ‘progression’, ‘balance’, ‘coherence’ and ‘continuity’ and that at the centre of planning is the ‘curriculum’, and the relationship between the key concepts and the content for learning and teaching. This is different from the ideology behind planning and assessment in the Reggio Emilia schools. In Edwards et al. (1998:252) “learning is a negotiated experience and involves the ongoing study of children”. The Coventry long term planning appears to focus more on the development of the Curriculum without parents’, children’s and the community’s participation. Perhaps the community here is represented by the governors but this is not explained or clearly stated.

In a similar way but not as detailed and methodical as the Reggio Emilia model is the involvement of the whole early years community, except for the parents, governors and Head teachers (which is encouraged in the medium term planning). The purpose here is,

“to develop for each year group a detailed programme which identifies learning opportunities which will enable most children to achieve the learning goals by the end of the foundation stage”.

In fact, the authors make use of the term ‘learning opportunities’ instead of ‘aims and objectives’ to describe the content of learning in the whole

Foundation stage phase in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation stage. In the Coventry document (2000:8) the 'Opportunities for Learning' are described in the following way:

"At the heart of the planning process in this document are the Opportunities for Learning which are devised for each area of learning. These have been drawn up with reference to the Early Learning Goals. By planning a curriculum which covers the Opportunities for Learning practitioners will ensure that the majority of children will achieve the Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage; more able children will also be able to achieve at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Practitioners are encouraged to use the two sheets with the complete set of Opportunities for Learning to monitor coverage over the year and the Foundation Stage. In a similar way the two sheets covering the Early Learning Goals can be used to monitor medium term planning".

As Kress and Hodge (1979) describe, the passivisations in the first two utterances: 'are devised' and 'have been drawn up' signify the deletion of actors - authors- in the making process of the 'Opportunities for Learning'. The hearer /reader is not certain as to whether these have been produced during the collaborative process in the production of this document or by the government. If they have been set up by the authors, they seem to have replaced the 'Stepping stones' in the planning process. The necessity for the production of 'aims and objectives' to guide teaching staff in the planning process and the use of the Early Learning Goals at a completion stage,

perhaps emphasise the ambiguity of the Foundation Stage Curriculum that was described earlier in 4.5.1 of this thesis.

In short term, weekly planning, the document proposes that planning should be “stimulating and challenging indoors and outdoors, and support children’s learning through adult led, adult supported and child initiated activities”. This quote echoes the romantic view of Froebel’s pedagogical ideas about childhood and discovery play in nature as explored in 3.2.2 as well as the Reggio Emilia socio-constructivist model of learning about the physical environment as flexible and open to modifications as the child protagonist progress along their learning paths (see 4.6).

4.8.3 The value of stories in the exploration of ‘Opportunities for Learning’

Stimulating and thought-provoking is one of the selected topics ‘Elmer’ that the authors demonstrated at the presentation of the ‘Curriculum Framework for the Foundation stage’ ring binder (Coventry Conference, 2000) to explain the teaching and learning potential of stories in the Foundation stage and their cross-curricular links. An example of how stories can explore the ‘Opportunities for Learning’ in the area of learning ‘Communication, Language and Literacy’ is shown below (Table 2). Out of the six areas of learning this one will be explored here in depth because throughout this thesis, language as a social construct of meaning and the socio-linguistic value of Drama in Education have constituted the two fundamental fields in the exploration of meaning-making.

Table 2: Coventry Education/Communication, Language and Literacy.

STORIES

Draft 1

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY		
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING	INTENDED LEARNING (Goals)	ACTIVITIES and RESOURCES
1 Listen to and use oral language including well-told stories	Listen with enjoyment and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems	Story sacks/bags 1/3/20/21
3 Listen and respond to the sound and rhythm of words in rhymes, poems, stories and songs		Role play stories (indoor/outdoor)
4 Create their own, and retell familiar rhymes, stories etc. and share them with others	Use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences	Stories in different forms - books, tapes, video 1/3
5 Role play a range of characters and situations real and imaginative		Range of stories to focus on different cultures 1/3
9 Share ideas and information	Extend their vocabulary, exploring the meanings and sounds of new words	Professional storyteller 1/3/15
10 Talk with others about personally meaningful experiences	Retell narratives in the correct sequence, drawing on the language patterns of stories	Visit to public library (at school library) 20/11/22
13 Explore meaning and extend vocabulary	Speak clearly and audibly with confidence and control and show awareness of the listener	Invite parents/step & other children to share favourite stories 1/3/10/20
16 Associate sounds with patterns in rhymes and words.	Know that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom	Discussions on "messages" in stories 10/23
20 Choose a book	Show an understanding of the elements of stories, such as main character, sequence of events, and openings, and how information can be found in non-fiction texts to answer questions about where, who, why and how	Develop the play areas to include opportunities for mark making/writing labels 26/28/29/32 30/31
21 Share fiction and non-fiction texts with adults and other children	Attempt writing for various purposes, using features of different forms such as lists, stories and instructions	
22 Understand how books are organised and that pictures, symbols and print carry meaning		
23 Respond to shared texts and express opinions		
25 Make marks with a range of tools		
26 Use mark making to communicate meaning, and expect a response		
27 Represent their own name		
28 Develop their own drawing and writing in play situations		
29 Write labels, lists, stories etc. with marks, letters and words		
30 Experiment with punctuation		
31 Use their phonic knowledge in writing		
32 Manipulate writing instruments		

Coventry Education Support and Advisory Service May 2000

Make up stories for puppet theatre 4/5
Stories which stimulate writing activities 28/29/30/31/32

Jolly
Portman

In the first column, the 'Opportunities for Learning' have replaced the 'Stepping stones' to offer more concrete contexts for learning. The authors presume that these will facilitate the teachers' understanding and meaning-making of the 'Early Learning Goals' in the Foundation stage. The numbering and lettering of the 'Opportunities for Learning' and the 'Intended Learning Goals' has been set up in random. The key verbs that provoke action are "listen", "use", "respond", "create", "retell", "role play", "share", "talk", "explore", "associate", "choose", "understand", "make", "expect", "represent", "develop", "write", "experiment" and "manipulate".

They are all active verbs in a present tense form with imperative and authoritative properties. The clauses are transitive that is, they signify processes of individuals acting physically upon an entity (themselves, language, the environment and other people). To examine these in relation to the elements of a holistic and Living Curriculum, the content of the text in the utterances signify action and activity as stated, interaction ("respond", "retell", "share", "associate", "represent", "experiment" and "manipulate"), discourse ("listen", "respond", "retell", "talk", "role play") and experience ("use", "create", "explore", "experiment" and "manipulate"). In addition, the verbs "respond", "create", "retell", "explore", "associate", "choose", "understand", "make", "expect", "represent", and "develop" imply that children are active participants in their own learning and should therefore be able to evolve as independent thinkers and makers throughout this process.

The second column of the chart states in a random numbering order what the Government expect of the children at the end of the Foundation stage. These have been already discussed in 3.5 and in this document they serve

an assisting purpose when Early Years staff wish to monitor and assess progress in learning.

In the third column, the authors use stories as context to facilitate the “Opportunities for learning” and meet the Early Learning Goals. Although they do not suggest that teaching and learning should take place through stories throughout the year, they provide the reader with learning contexts where the potential of ‘stories’ as a medium of learning and their cross-curricular links can be explored further in an Early Years setting. In the second chapter of this thesis I demonstrated the cultural and linguistic potential for narrative and human activity in drama and stories. Therefore, the authors’ ideas in the “Activities and Resources” column of the “Communication, Language and Literacy” area in the Foundation stage curriculum can provide the stimulus for the development of a sociolinguistic model. Therefore in chapter five I will propose a new tool for teaching and learning in Early Years. This will aim to resolve the central problem of this thesis, and answer how drama and story are not only vehicles for learning language but also an exploration of a meaning-making and a problem-solving process in the cultural contexts of Early Years settings.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter I drew comparisons between two models of teaching in the current domain of Early Years education in England and the Reggio Emilia Italian model. This comparison aimed at establishing similarities and differences between the three models and whenever adequate information was available, I particularly emphasised the concept of language teaching

and learning. The data for this comparison was revealed through textual analysis of authoritative documents. Through textual analysis the documents have revealed evidence about educational and pedagogic ethos, praxis and methodology in diverse cultural contexts but within historically similar pedagogical domains. The textual analysis revealed information about the interests of the dominant classes and the conditions for the production of the documents. All three documents view Early Years not only as a nurturing stage of early childhood but also as a significant time for educational developments to take place where play, experience and investigation are the tools for the acquisition of skills. Interaction, discourse and activity are also key methodological concepts which require thorough knowledge of child development issues and an awareness of teaching techniques for structuring play for learning.

The Foundation Stage (2000) document reflects some of the changes in the cultural and political background of England which took place in the twentieth century; high taxes, monetary inflation owned industry, the success of Mrs Thatcher, the 'ideal' of free markets, the marginalisation of the Arts and the new direction towards science and technology which was the dominant class' ideology for the goals of education 'to fit people to do a job of work' (Callaghan in Maclure, 1988).

However, there are some positive starting points at a social and a political level for further developments to take place:

1. the recognition of Early childhood as an important stage for children's education in England with its own Foundation stage Curriculum;
2. the focus of teaching and learning in play, investigation, action, experience and discourse;

3. The extended age range (five plus, which includes the Reception year) for teaching and learning through the Foundation stage Curriculum.

It was shown that the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Coventry document are less balanced in terms of theory and practice, and in their communication to the reader, whilst the more balanced model appears to be the Reggio Emilia. This could be explained by the fact that the Foundation stage model appears to be a top-down model (power is exercised from the government to the teachers with the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies acting as reference points for the development of language and mathematical thinking in Early Years). Similarly, the Coventry document seems to be a top-down model, compounded by the fact that the authors have not developed their own theory to match the practice that they are advocating; instead, they try to satisfy the government's expectations. On the other hand this mediated position makes the Coventry model a working document and accessible by Early Years staff to use in any context and setting.

The Reggio Emilia is a more integrated model which is a bottom-up rather than top-down model. Developmental theories and practice are mutually fed by research, observation and discourse. The teaching and learning environment reflects the children's culture and interests. Children are the focus of all the changes and developments in the Curriculum which is based on communication and structured investigation in contexts of immediate use in the real world. Teaching and learning take place through considered scaffolding, and teaching staff are aware of the children's Zone of Proximal Development. However, although the Reggio Emilia schools have influenced current practice and the Early Years Curriculum developments in England,

the model is not easily adaptable to these cultural contexts. Moreover, even after the examination of the three texts, 'meaning-making' in language use remains a complex area to address directly through these models. The following chapter aims to deal with this issue through proposing a model that uses elements of story and drama to teach language in Early Years.

Chapter Five

Bridging the gap

**Practical considerations in the development of a
pedagogy for enhancing literacy in Early years**

5.1 Introduction

As has been shown in chapter four the teaching of language is beleaguered by inconsistencies in terms of educational and pedagogic ethos, praxis and methodology. Firstly, the Foundation stage (2000) document promises to act as a paradigm, an interpretative framework (see chapter four) for teachers, however the textual analysis revealed that it is a top down model and the authors' use of generalisations, and at times abstract and ambiguous language, overemphasises the ethos and principles of Early years education against praxis and methodology. With reference to Table 1 (see chapter four) the document seems to fulfil some of the requirements which would describe a holistic and living curriculum under the titles ethos and praxis but at a theoretical level. Secondly, the Reggio Emilia paradigm, as a bottom up model, favours a romantic and idealistic view of education which has survived over decades in the situational context of a particular region of Italy. In this context the Communist party has historically held the balance of power and the social structures are framed by the Marxist ideology and progressive views of education. In this paradigm the textual analysis revealed that ethos meets praxis because theory and practice are directly linked with the history and culture of the country and the particularities of the region (see chapter four). Similarly, the available literature about the Reggio schools and my experience during the study tour (October, 2000) indicate that methodological tools for teaching and learning are well developed and in place but due to language barriers and the protection of local copyright, any specific information about methodology of language teaching has been difficult to obtain. With reference to the Table 1 (see chapter four) the Reggio model fulfils most of the requirements of a holistic and living curriculum in relation to ethos and praxis. However, the textual analysis revealed two issues which create the need for a methodology in Early years language teaching in the United Kingdom:

1. According to Halliday (see chapter one) language teaching and learning takes place in situational contexts. The Reggio paradigm cannot therefore be easily adapted to other political and cultural contexts, but could influence other countries in the development of a philosophy about Early Years education based on its pedagogical principles about teaching and learning.
2. A holistic approach to the development of children's language should consider situational, cultural and historical contexts (see chapter one).

The Coventry paradigm (2000) was also considered and shown to be a top down model as the authors do not offer a theoretical framework to establish reasons for suggesting this methodology; instead they aim to facilitate the Foundation Stage (2000) and the Early Learning goals (1999). The model uses stories as a teaching tool and implies that this medium may also assist teachers' understanding and delivery of the Early Years curriculum. With reference to Table 1 (see chapter four) the model seems to offer practical and methodological guidance; however, this is not fully supported theoretically. As neither of the three models fully develop the teaching of language in theoretical, practical and methodological terms, which would serve to enhance existing practice in British schools, this chapter will specifically look at issues of methodology for language development in Early Years with a view to proposing a realistic model of language development using Drama in Education as its principal methodology. It has been clearly shown throughout the thesis that play and well structured Drama activities serve to significantly enhance the development of Early Years language in meaningful contexts.

Specifically, in this chapter I am searching for a methodology to reflect a holistic and Living Curriculum as referred to in chapter four, and a methodology which views language as a discourse-making process (see

chapters one and two). Building on the theory explored previously, this chapter is suggesting that in Early Years, the focus in terms of language and literacy development should be on discourse-making, that is giving children the linguistic resources to both problem-solve and to organise and maintain their social worlds (see chapters one and two). In this context, young children can make sense of the world, discourse can be seen as language development inseparable from the development, making, negotiation of rules, terms and conditions of the child's personal and social world (see Gee, Kress, Halliday, Vygotsky and Bruner in chapter one). In terms of methodology the chapter suggests that drama as a teaching and learning process can be a methodological tool for meaningful discourse-making in Early Years. As children develop naturally through play at this stage, fictitious contexts in Drama in Education created through the use of drama and theatre conventions and language registers (see chapter two), have the potential to encourage children's interaction of personal responses with fiction (see chapter two).

5.2 Methodology

Throughout the research as Malinowski urges (1923), I did not arrive at these principles with a closed mind but with an idea of what to look for. My initial aim was to set up a paradigm for planning purposes and classroom use for the development of children's speaking and listening skills in accordance with the Foundation stage's (2000) Early Learning Goals.

Gallagher (2001:105) describes research in the classroom as follows:

"All research endeavours, whether qualitative or quantitative, reflect a paradigm, a world view or set of propositions, that explains how the world is perceived by the researcher".

The teacher-researcher approach in this chapter, driven by questions from daily practice, makes the theory/practice dichotomy, one of an active and

reflexive relationship. Kaufmann (in Gallagher, 2001:105), examining curriculum-making in the arts, operates from the supposition that,

“The act of teaching is an unfinished event until the actual teacher, children, particular situation, and environment are in active relationship”.

As an analogy to this, Gallagher (2001:105) describes the teacher-researcher’s work as an “unfinished research event until the local concerns and needs of [other agencies involved] are brought to bear on the practices and therefore the reflecting-on-practices, or theorising, of the teacher”. The benefits of classroom-based research can be contextualised and understood because of, rather than in spite of, its specific nature. It will however, demand work from other teachers, asking them to reflect back to their own contexts. A critical distance then may illuminate aspects of a particular context (see Halliday, 1978a) rather than replicating variables from one context to another, the particular qualities of one qualitative study might illuminate the elements of another.

In this thesis, possible ways of discourse-making through Gee’s, Kress’, Halliday’s, Vygotsky’s and Bruner’s social theories of language are explored (see chapter one). In chapters two and four I looked at methodological aspects of discourse-making in Drama in Education, the Foundation Stage curriculum (2000), the Reggio Emilia model and the Coventry document (2000). The research emphasised the concepts of language and drama which are viewed through a socio-constructivist perspective and reveal that both language and drama are evolving processes and social constructs. Two of the main issues which need to be considered when devising an Early Years Curriculum (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, 2000) are:

- 1) Young children make meaning (understand the world around them) through discourse, play, exploration and investigation (see chapters one and two).

2) Drama and narrative are artistic media and social constructs based on discourse-making and need to be incorporated into planning (see chapter two).

Therefore, the challenge arises of how one can plan the Early Years curriculum using the children's interests as starting points but at the same time adhering to the requirements of the Early Learning Goals (1999)? The purpose of this study is to examine whether Drama in Education can successfully realise this challenge. It has already been shown that it is theoretically underpinned by the fields of child development and child psychology. Within such a context I, as a teacher-researcher, decided to use the theoretical findings from this research in order to form a new practice and develop a new model for Early Years in a primary school setting with its own already established social structure and belief systems. However, there are times when the teacher-researcher's desires can be rehearsed, refashioned and refused. Britzman (1991:220) states that,

“the construction of the [new], the real, the necessary, and the imaginary are constantly shifting as student teachers set about to accentuate the identities of their teaching selves in contexts that are already overpopulated with the identities and discursive practices of others”.

Fullan (1991:4) describes this process of deconstruction of established social mechanisms in educational institutions and the reconstruction of a new situation as 'change' and 'progress', and states that:

“The key to understanding the worth of particular changes, or to achieving desired changes, concerns what I call 'the problem of meaning'”.

This work would have been of limited value to me if at the outset of the research process I was determined to prove that my initial hypotheses were

unchanged. Thus, through my role as a teacher-researcher, the application of theory to practice became more of a process of narrative inquiry about how people actually experience change, as distinct from how it was initially intended, as an action research process. My employment as an Early Years co-ordinator with responsibility for the Nursery and Play group at a community school in Birmingham in 2001-2002 contributed to my changing and evolving understanding under the pressure of day-to-day practice in the school. This experience was used as a case study, as I reconstructed the life of my working environment over several months. The teacher-researcher approach enabled me to match my research texts to the culture and the reality of teaching and school (Dadds, 1995; Dadds and Hart, 2001). A commitment to the study of the researcher's professional practice meant that 'Planning designs' had to be developed. Their purpose was to improve upon the practice in the setting and provide fellow practitioners with the methodological tools to work with the Foundation stage document. When I started my new role in the school, this research was still under way and I hoped that a methodology for discourse-making through drama would derive from my practice. However, certain problems within the classroom reality focused my attention on issues of a more mundane nature but also to a greater lived understanding of the disciplines of knowledge such as, social theories of language, ethics and pedagogy. Fullan (1991:xiv) describes the changing process within educational institutions as:

"Confronting the relationship between theory and practice in teacher development is one of the more fertile quagmires for developing a practical theory of planned change".

5.3 *Not a perfect start*

As Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (2000) point out, much qualitative research is based on a holistic view that social phenomena, human dilemmas, and the nature of cases are situational and influenced by happenings of many kinds. 'Not a perfect start' is a reconstruction of several months in the life of my Early Years setting where I tried to develop and implement my model of teaching the Early years Curriculum through Drama in Education. I became an Early Years co-ordinator in 2001 with full responsibility for Play group, Nursery and Reception Year classes. I envisaged that my position there would enable me to apply the theoretical elements of this research into practice, such as discourse as a making and negotiating process of children's social and personal worlds (see Gee in chapter one); social context for meaningful learning (see Halliday and Kress in chapter one); development of language through the children's Zone of Proximal Development (see Vygotsky in chapter one); and scaffolding in teaching (see Bruner in chapter one). My experience from drama classes fuelled my desire to explore the potential of Drama in Education as a medium for discourse-making with young children for the development of their personal and social skills in the realisation of the Foundation stage and the Early Learning Goals. However, my inexperience and passion was foreshadowed by problems and issues concerning the development of the setting and the whole school which seriously limited my aspirations. I had not taken into consideration what Fullan (1991:5) describes as the interface between individual and collective meaning and action that, "solutions must come through the development of shared meaning". This means that other people (staff, leadership, administration) who are involved in the process of change may have different interests and attitudes which may have prevented me from accomplishing my aims and objectives fully. From the beginning I discovered that problems related to the situational context of the school and the concept of 'change' needed to be considered against the following (these

findings are from a collection of raw data such as the school's policy documents, development plans, administrative documents and 'professional' documents):

1. The majority of children (98%) were learning English as an additional language and their families were Muslim. However, the Nursery setting seemed to be a more multicultural environment with a good mixture of English, Asian, Indian and Afro-Caribbean children. As there were no other Nurseries in the area, this Nursery was feeding local schools with pupils who then moved onto other schools in the area (Internal memos, 2001).
2. The school's standards in language and literacy were below the national average, however after the last Ofsted inspection (February, 2000) the whole school focused on the development of Language and Literacy, with particular emphasis on writing (School's curriculum development plan, 2001).
3. From communications with professional school bodies (September, 2002) in the Foundation stage, Nursery and Reception were working as separate units, planning could not be found from the previous year and the Early Years policy was not yet in place.
4. The new teaching staff who were starting in Reception and Nursery classes were Year Six teachers with no training in the Foundation stage. Foundation stage training was needed for all Early Years staff but no prior thought had been given to it by the administration in the school (interviews and personal diaries).
5. Particular difficulties between the Nursery staff, the previous manager of the Nursery and Play group and the administration of the school had created friction in the working relationships. Most Early Years staff were working in the same school for many years and were reluctant to change.
6. The indoor and outdoor environment of the Nursery was neglected, dull and unfriendly. The setting lacked resources in all six areas of learning, most children's story books were old, there were no teaching resources, toys and learning equipment were incomplete and the setting was full of old tables and

chairs as it was used as both a learning environment and a dinner area. The whole school ethos was low and teachers seemed unhappy and suspicious of new members of staff appointed by the Head. With reference to this in particular I agree with Barth (1990:19) when he observes that,

“to the extent that teacher - principal interactions are suspicious, guarded, distant, adversarial, acrimonious, or judgmental, we are likely to see these traits pervading the school. The relationship between teacher and principal seems to have an extraordinary amplifying effect. It models what all relationships will be”.

These issues generated questions for me such as, what values were involved in the process of educational change in this school? What was the school's ethos and how was it affecting practice? Who would benefit from potential change in the Early Years? How much of a priority is change in the methodology?

Even before I started, I realised that the Drama in Education methodology that I wanted to research and implement was only a small part of the process of educational change required in this setting, and that the greatest initial need was to comprehend the dynamics of the process of change.

Fullan (1982:4) states that,

“In order to achieve greater meaning in educational change, we must come to understand both the small and the big pictures.”

In my case, the educational change in the Early Years setting of this school is the small picture and concerns my own subjective meaning. However, the aim of the phenomenological interpretation of change is to use my actual experience as a tool to understand the circumstances that prevented the development of new educational practice.

Fullan (1982:28) states that,

“Innovations are not neutral in their benefits and that there are many reasons other than educational merit that influence decisions to change. A closer examination reveals that innovations can be adopted for symbolic, political or personal reasons”.

Throughout the year, it became increasingly apparent that any innovations introduced by the administration of the school seemed to reflect the latter part of Fullan’s quote, with greater emphasis given to the political and personal reasons. For example, a conflict of ethos which I had to tackle was whether my specific research desire to develop a methodology based on the theoretical findings from my research was the right approach to take in the situational context of the setting. The reality was that if my personal ideas were not engaging others in the educational setting and the resources to support implementation of new ideas were unavailable, my decision as a manager to ignore these realities would contribute to the poor atmosphere already reflected in the school’s ethos. As Fullan (1982:5) notes: “the interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday situations is where change stands or falls”. In this social setting the leadership model for change is a top down one. Solutions and change historically come from the top and not through the development of shared meaning with the staff. Whilst Fullan (1991:168) elaborates on the need for educational change in schools in the context of collaboration between all staff, in the school system where I work, the multiple realities of the participants in implementing change were not fully considered.

Fullan (1991:29) categorises innovations into “first- and second-order changes”; the first are about improving what is currently being done and the second are about fundamental changes such as collaborative work cultures. I decided to proceed with second-order changes. For example, the lack of updated planning, of adequate policy to fulfil the government’s new

expectations in Early Years curriculum for the Foundation Stage of Learning and the inappropriate environment to accommodate a child-centred programme of education became issues which I considered a priority in managing the Early Years setting of the school and which further mitigated against the practical implementation of my research in this setting. Other issues which I had to carefully think about were motivating staff with little or no training and with low expectations, team building, providing and organising training on the Foundation stage curriculum, purchasing resources and organising a child friendly indoor and outdoor environment. As a manager of a small scale project (the Nursery, Play group and Reception classes) in a large school, I decided to amend my research plans to a more modest, achievable level within the realities of the situation. As Fullan (1991) has stated, these can be, interaction with colleagues on improvements, employing knowledgeable people or re-educating staff on child development issues and changing slowly the culture, ethos and structure of the Early Years environment.

5.4 Practical considerations for the development of language in Early Years

In 2001, as a newly appointed Early Years co-ordinator entering a school which had no formalised policies or consistencies of approach, I prepared a series of documents with the aim to deliver a child-centred and balanced Foundation stage curriculum in a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment. In the Appendices section, document one (Appendix A) is my attempt to put in place systems which support a philosophy for Early Years education which on one hand incorporates the government requirements for the Foundation stage of learning but on the other hand, augments the requirements by implementing some of the fundamental conceptions about the social languages of children as explored in chapters one and four. In this document I indicate flexible contexts for learning largely based on a holistic

approach related to personal, cultural and social events in the lives of young children. For the purpose of clarity for the reader, I will include aspects of the long-term, medium and short term policies here but for greater detail, please refer to the Appendices section. Using a topic approach to teaching allows space for any project or drama work to take place when a relevant opportunity arises, such as through use of a rhyme, or a song as initiated by a practitioner. For example, the long-term planning (see Appendix A) outlines the Early Years philosophy for teaching, learning and the delivery of the Curriculum and indicates that learning should be a negotiated and communicated activity between teachers and learners. Influenced from the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the document implements ideas such as the development of the curriculum through project work and observations of pupils' performance in instructing and planning the next steps in their learning (see Chapter four and Appendix A).

Progressive educationalists who emphasise the needs and capacities of the individual child such as Froebel (in Lindon, 2001) and Dewey (1938), suggest the use of the senses in a stimulating and natural environment, with freedom of choice, activity and movement, are also prominent in the ideology of the long-term plan (see Appendix A and Chapter three).

According to the description of a holistic and living curriculum (see Table 1 in chapter four) this methodology must be interactive, make use of speech and discourse, make meaningful connections with the world, offer children quality of learning experiences, scaffold their learning, reflect and evaluate during the process at their own ZOPD. This new methodology should take into consideration the following principles from chapters one and two:

1. Language develops in social contexts of interaction (Gee, 1996; Kress, 1997; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1986; Bolton, 1992; Fleming, 1997; Neelands, 1992; Wagner, 1976; Wooland, 1993).

2. Interaction is stimulated by discourse, action and activity, meaning-making and signification (Gee, 1996; Kress, 1997).
3. Learning is an experiential phenomenon (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1986; Bolton, 1992; Fleming, 1997; Neelands, 1992; Wagner, 1976; Wooland, 1993).
4. Effective teaching takes into consideration the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1986).
5. In scaffolding a child's learning, teachers' questioning and language registers are of paramount importance (Neelands, 1992; Wagner, 1976; Wooland, 1993; Fleming, 1997).
6. Reflection and evaluation during the process of action and interaction are significant assessment procedures (Neelands, 1992; Wagner, 1976; Wooland, 1993).
7. In drama the teacher and pupil in and out of role can motivate learning experiences (Neelands, 1992; Wagner, 1976; Wooland, 1993; Fleming, 1997; Bolton, 1992).

I began in a very non-threatening manner to create change in the outdoor learning environment. An example of the practical application of these ideas in the day-to-day education of the young children in the Nursery was a continuous project on gardens, an ongoing learning process which was developed over several months with Nursery children (2001-2002). The project was not a pre-planned idea and this is the reason why it is not included in the long-term plan. The lack of an outdoor stimulating and learning environment in the particular Early Years setting created the need for a project which I introduced and developed cross-curricularly with the support and involvement of all Nursery staff, parents and other agencies. It was seen as fun, non-threatening and provided the staff with an opportunity to get used to me and vice versa. Drama work was used as a facilitating teaching methodology to reinforce personal and social dispositions to

environmental issues such as, children in role as expert gardeners who were advising adults (outside agencies, parents and staff) about the needs of seeds, plants and trees and the maintenance of the garden area. In this context, language was introduced as a communication device for problem-solving issues arising from the process such as, 'what do the plants need in order to survive under cold winter conditions?' I worked obliquely, using drama because staff were not used to this way of working and were perhaps not used to using pupils' interests as starting points. Academic work (phonology: initial sounds of plants; mathematical skills: classification of seeds and numbers; scientific skills: observation, recording and reporting; reading: looking for information about plants, trees and gardens; and writing: letters and reports) was also introduced and developed but out of the need for communication between the speakers, (adults or children) and the listeners (see Halliday, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978; 1990 and Bruner, 1984). Through a trickle effect, I introduced colleagues to the philosophy and practice of Drama in Education (see Chapter two) in order to structure the indoor and outdoor environment and deliver the 'Stepping stones' as outlined in the Foundation stage Curriculum (Early Learning Goals, 1999; Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage, 2000). To offer some examples, role play was not introduced in a particularly designated area of the Nursery (as is usual practice) because children role play spontaneously in the whole Nursery, wherever the environment and the resources grab their imagination either indoors or outdoors. We turned an indoor area into an indoor garden and used it for science in order to be able to continue with our 'Project work' when the weather conditions restricted the outdoor learning facilities. Different shops (sweet shop, Newsagent and Travel agent) were created to support mathematical development, and story settings such as, 'the house of the three bears' and a Hairdressing Salon, which were carefully selected following communication with the children about their favourite stories, their likes and dislikes, were also established.

During the academic year (2001-2002) I used Drama in Education techniques in three major contexts:

1. To model highly effective cross-curricular teaching techniques for student Nursery nurses and Nursery staff and train them on the delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum (1999; 2000).
2. To assist parents with parenting, learning and behavioural issues.
3. To teach Nursery children personal, social and academic skills through stories, topic and Project work during circle time activities and focused cross-curricular work.



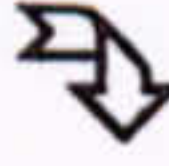
The document which follows (Table 3) is an example of how the Early Learning Goals (1999) could be delivered through medium term planning. It is an interpretation of the heavily theoretical Foundation stage curriculum for practitioners to use in any setting in order for them to understand how the 'Stepping stones'/Early Learning Goals could be delivered. This document aims to act as a process of scaffolding (see Bruner in chapter one) perhaps in any Early Years setting because I communicate with practitioners through the 'Examples' column and recommend direct daily contact and team teaching within the Early Years setting. It serves to demonstrate how progression can be achieved using various dramatic and other learning stimuli.



As the focus of this thesis is on the development of language, I will discuss only one aspect of the area of learning 'Communication, Language and Literacy', which is the area of 'Speaking and Listening'. The topic to be studied is 'Looking after animals' and would span over eight weeks both in the Nursery and in the Reception year. Moreover, the medium term plan is a compiled document, offering my own interpretation of the QCA guidance for the Foundation stage and the Coventry document. In this document I use the

idea of the ‘Stepping stones’ as a metaphor to show how teaching and learning can progressively take place in any Early Years setting.

The document on the following page (Table 3) is an example of this plan and it refers specifically to Communication, Language and Literacy within an Early Years setting.

Table 3: Medium Term Plan. Eleni Kanira’s interpretation of the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000)/Communication Language and Literacy.

Communication, language and literacy						
Language for communication (speaking and listening)						
		Stepping stones	What does the practitioner need to do?		Opportunities for learning	Examples
A	↑	Use words and/or gestures, including body language such as eye contact and facial expression, to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for children that encourage them to use gesture to communicate• Talk with children to make links between their gestures and words: 'You have bumped your leg and I can see from your face that it is hurting you'.	Progression from age three... 	Listen to and use oral language including well-told stories. Create their own and retell familiar rhymes and stories etc and share them with others.	Communicate needs, simple stories using puppets, props, instruments, listen to and sing action nursery rhymes, show and tell, share favourite books, use talk to discuss pictures, use talk to sequence events, interactive computer programs
B	→	Use simple statements and questions often linked to gestures Use intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make their meaning clear to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage children to express their needs in words and adopt common social conventions• Provide experiences that encourage learning through the whole body, such as climbing, cookery, clay and painting, so that adults can support children's actions with language, for example, 'You're going up the slide and now you are coming down'.• Respond to children and reply in words that extend and model the child's communication. For example, child: 'Dog in bath ...', adult: 'Yes, that's right, the dog's in the bath. I think they're going to get all the mud off him ...'.• Judge whether and now best to intervene• Support children in developing alternative communication strategies, such as signing, where appropriate• Provide opportunities for children whose home language is other than English to use that language.	 	Role-play a range of characters and situations real and imaginary. Ask and answer questions. Express needs, thoughts and feelings with increasing confidence in talk and non-verbal language. Use language for a range of purposes, eg to describe, explain, predict and develop ideas. Share ideas and information.	Act and re-enact stories, puppets, props, role-play, drama, circle time, listen to story tapes, sing-along, action rhymes, show and tell, share news, favourite books, discuss ideas, use talk to sequence events, make own books, interactive computer programs

C	<p>Have emerging self-confidence to speak to others about wants and interests</p> <p>Use simple grammatical structures</p> <p>Ask simple questions, often in the form of 'where' or 'what'</p> <p>Talk alongside others, rather than with them.</p> <p>Use talk to gain attention and initiate exchanges.</p> <p>Use action rather than talk to demonstrate or explain to others</p> <p>Initiate conversation, attend to and take account of what others say, and use talk to resolve disagreements</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage conversation and help children to respond to the contributions of others in role play and other activities • Look at books and talk about and name objects in real everyday situations such as going to the shops or putting away toys • Encourage conversation with others and model appropriate conventions – taking turns, waiting until someone else has finished, listening to others and using expressions such as 'please', 'thank you' and 'can I...?' • Provide time for children to initiate discussions from shared experiences and texts • Give thinking time for children to decide what they want to say and how they will say it 	<div>   </div> <p>Early learning goals for language for communication</p> <p>... to the end of the foundation stage</p>	<p>Discuss issues and ideas and negotiate plans.</p> <p>Explore meaning and extend vocabulary.</p> <p>Take part in short and more extended conversations.</p> <p>Share fiction and non-fiction texts with adults and other children.</p>	<p>Act out, make their own stories up, through drama, role-play, puppetry, props etc, make own books, share books, fiction and non-fiction, make choices about books, circle time, talk, activities, respond with greater fluency using language, respond, listen and carry out simple instructions, interactive computer programs</p>	
ELG	<p>Resulting in</p> <p>Interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up collaborative tasks, for example constructions, food activities, story-making through role play and problem-solving, and help children to talk and plan together about how they will begin, what parts each will play and what materials they will need 				
A – age 3	B – age 4	C – age 5					

The first two columns are taken from the QCA document (Foundation Stage Curriculum, 2000). As I have already suggested in chapter four, the QCA document is not clear about praxis. I therefore suggest that the first column should be used by practitioners as a guide to understanding the content of teaching and to assess the children accordingly. Practical experience in my Early Years setting and in other settings indicated that the content of this column was not informative enough for either teaching or assessment purposes, and that further documents needed to be produced by local authorities or individual settings (Journal Nursery World, 2002) in order to practically illuminate the specified aims. That is why I called this section 'Learning and Achievement'. As a result of this inclusion, the examples of 'good' practice as indicated by the QCA document are more self-explanatory, and I have therefore incorporated these points to facilitate planning.

The 'Opportunities for Learning' column aims to provide readers and practitioners with broad learning contexts so that the examples in the fourth column will be explored further. All the rows in the medium term charts are colour coded. These are the same colours as suggested by the authors in the QCA document for the Foundation stage. The difference here is that the colour coded rows serve a specific purpose: to direct the practitioners by showing them which stepping stones they should look at and select from when they plan differentiated learning for the children. The examples aim to enrich the planning and inform practitioners about the use of dramatic forms and other learning and artistic media in a differentiated way.

In the column 'Examples' the yellow row refers to Play-group and Nursery age children (two to three-and-a-half year-olds). The idea behind it is that the rows will not act as developmental stages in children's progress but as indicators of gradual achievement of progress in performance assisted activity (see ZOPD in chapter one). In the first row I propose that significant

consideration should be given to children's personal, social and physical development through communication and discourse. Whether children are first or second language speakers, they still need to develop trust in relationships with others (adults and peers), familiarisation with space and the environment, and self-confidence in order to talk and share needs and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1971; Bennett, 1993 and Winnicott, 1957; 1987a). Throughout the first five years they develop physically and mature rapidly, as explored in chapter one, therefore, familiarisation with the dramatic medium through circle time, thematic activities for personal and social development, as well as through games and exercises using artistic media such as, music and instruments, props and objects as symbols to represent ideas (see Vygotsky and pivot in chapter one), puppets to model and project feelings and dance to develop spatial awareness and physical co-ordination should be prioritised. Meanwhile, throughout the whole of the foundation stage the development of physical co-ordination and skills will liberate children so that they can use their bodies to serve their mind (see chapter one). As explored in chapter two, in Drama in Education physical activity is subjected to discourse therefore the development of gross, locomotive, fine manipulative skills and hand-eye / foot-eye control will develop large and small arm and hand movements which can lead to fluent writing and the development of concentration. Spatial awareness and balance are linked to later problem solving situations.

Tharp and Gallimore (see chapter one) suggested that in stage one of the zone of proximal development children's performance needs are assisted by more capable others (adults or peers) when they offer directions or modelling, therefore the child's response becomes acquiescent or imitative. In a similar way, the first step (yellow row) of the medium term planning introduces dramatic and other literal skills which will gradually assist the child to understand how the parts of an activity relate to one another, or to

understand the meaning of the performance. Wertsch and Vygotsky (see chapter one) referred to it as the intermental plane of performance assisted activity because activity is stimulated more by external factors (adults or more capable peers). At this stage, adults or more capable peers set up and facilitate the context for learning. The examples in the yellow row are an attempt to demonstrate different creative, communicational and learning conventions for the process of discourse-making to occur as demonstrated in chapter two.

As exemplified in chapter two, structured play at this stage means that the adult will set up goal-oriented activities for the child to operate in, they will assist the child to convert previous experience into structures, and will built up inter-subjectivity, mutual attention and commonality in interaction. In order to channel pupils' structured play effectively and efficiently I needed a 'holding form' context for the Drama to develop. I therefore, chose the convention of 'Mantle of the Expert' (Heathcote, 1995) to develop children's familiarisation of animals, looking after their needs and in the process developing their personal, social, emotional competencies and linguistic capabilities (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995). With reference to Heathcote's systems of classroom communication (see chapter two), this is the stage where adults would employ, during the course of their discourse in structured 'play activities', (see Bolton in chapter two), 'signalling', 'signing', 'signification' and 'gestures' which can be read by any language speakers and can introduce meaningful learning in and out of drama. The use of dramatic and other learning conventions, signing, narrative and discourse are significant elements in adult-supported and adult-led activities. Adult language registers (see chapter two) can provide opportunities for interaction between speaker and listener (see chapter two) as a way of acting and creating interpersonal meanings. In the 'textual practice' of discourse (see chapters one and two) the semantic feature of the field introduces new

language and the adult assists in the conversation. The child uses language to play, manipulate objects (toys) in terms of existence, possession, movement and location. Planning the next step in the child's Zone of Proximal Development (see QCA document in chapter three) could be set by the adult's careful consideration of the tenor in which the child will express his/her own intentions and controls, will share by verbal and non-verbal interaction, and this will determine the course of action. The use of language registers in the form of semantic units associated with features of text and as questioning devices to reflect and move the learning process forward (see chapter two) can be introduced at this stage and provide a more playful and sophisticated way of implementing the conventions of language such as, sharing daily news by making a newspaper where the adult can model language verbally and in writing (see Appendix A). The mode at this stage is diffused with narrative and exploratory elements. It is spoken and alternates between monologue and dialogue. The child refers to objects in particular situations such as, when a child draws a picture and explains what he/she does and the adult sets up tasks to instruct the learning process. Elements of experiential learning can be introduced. If the self-spectator construct, as introduced in chapter two, is used as a form of assessment during this process of reflection-in-action learning, educational progress will be determined by children beguiled away from resistance to experience.

In the blue row, according to Vygotsky (see chapter one), I suggest that children who have been instructed in their learning and development through these media (the examples show mediated tools for learning experience), will be more mature when co-operating in drama, understand and respond to dramatic devices in the learning contexts of role-play, re-enact stories and events and participate as a group or individuals in puppet theatre or experiential and dramatic action. According to Wertsch and Vygotsky (see chapter one) tasks begin to be carried out on the intramental plane here. The

blue row refers to Nursery and the beginning of Reception. For children who speak English as an additional language, translation throughout the process is a necessary tool in understanding the tools of communication, and most settings nowadays employ staff who speak the children's languages.

With reference to Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) exploration of the concept of Zone of Proximal Development the blue row serves here as an equivalent to the second stage of performance assisted activity where performance is more assisted by self. At this stage, which corresponds to the intramental plane, a child who has participated in previous activities and has been successfully assisted by others has internalised concepts, ideas and skills and will be able to begin to carry out tasks with less assistance from others. As demonstrated in chapter two, language begins to meet Drama more at this stage in the form of narrative and action subordinated to meaning. The adults' language registers can introduce experiential learning in meaningful dramatic contexts. Teacher-in-role and out of role can signify the context, time and space and engage pupils with dramatic tension in the content of learning. Meaningful tasks can provide the context for cross-curricular connections. Children in and out of role as experts of curriculum tasks become co-authors of the text (see Halliday and Bakhtin in chapter one), investigate areas of learning and report back to the whole group through linguistic and artistic conventions. With reference to the self-spectator construct, progress at this level can be identified when pupils begin to accept challenges, take risks, volunteer and begin to search for tools to put them to use and test the results of their actions.

Finally, in the green area of the medium term plan the child who has experienced meaningful learning in the two previous planes will emerge from lifelong learning. This is the year of Reception (four to five year olds). Tharp and Gallimore (1988) suggest that at this level the execution of tasks can be

smooth and integrated. Less assistance will be needed for the completion of tasks. Performance is developing and the child harvests the fruits of his/her development. Children potentially perform tasks independently and they are more skilled to co-operate in drama at a cognitive, physical and social level. This happens not just as a physical action but also as a mental language activity that uses metaphors and analogies to communicate meanings and places people in different time and spaces. At this stage, the whole curriculum might be explored through narrative, different forms of which have already been introduced by Language, Drama and Early years practitioners such as Egan (1986, 1988), Booth (1994), Neelands (1992), Winston and Tandy (1998), Bolton and Heathcote (1999) and Coventry Early Years Development and Childcare (2000).

Assessment at the child's level could take place when progress has been made through the self-spectator construct: when the child watches the intention 'forming' process, assesses tools in use, accepts responsibilities and energises. In addition, the authors of the QCA Foundation stage document (see Medium-term plan) allocate a fourth row to describe what children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation stage under the title Early Learning Goals. In terms of progression through the Zone of Proximal Development this could be the fourth stage of performance capacity in which the child's potential has developed to such an extent that assistance is mainly provided by the self. Assessment through the process of self-spectator should provide evidence as described at the fourth stage of the construct that is, the child demonstrates stringent 'forming' interests and self-discipline. However, without the practitioners' awareness of the content of learning in previous stages, I do not consider the picture, which the Early Learning Goals set up for children at the end of the Foundation stage, to be complete.

Following a years' preparation and familiarisation with the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) and dramatic forms of teaching and learning the curriculum, the researcher's aim will be to propose, during the course of the next academic year (2002-2003), a more detailed plan for Nursery and Play group children. This plan, as outlined below in section 5.5, will aim to develop children's literacy abilities in the context of a story using the Dramatic convention of 'Mantle of the Expert' approach to education. In planning, the researcher will adopt a holistic perspective to view the curriculum, the child and adult roles.

5.5 The way forward through the 'Mantle of the Expert' approach to education

The 'Mantle of the Expert' Dramatic convention (see chapter two) has been devised by Dorothy Heathcote (1995) and works in classroom situations on the basis of eight operative rules:

1. "Teacher and students take on functional roles (not characters), they are expert at 'doing' something.
2. The doing is always in the form of tasks which must never ask participants to actually perform the genuine task: for example, makers of shoes must never be given shoes to make of real leather with actual tools.
3. The teacher divides the tasks so as to use and extend the skills, degrees of knowledge and engage the specific learning areas and domains. These tasks are graded and incremental over a period. 'Mantle of the Expert' is long term work.
4. The teacher and students take on more and more responsibility for more and more aspects of the enterprises - ever widening circles.
5. The teacher cannot use 'teacher talk' and must work as a colleague, employing 'restricted' code language as experts in the actual world of work enterprises do.

6. All participants realise that the enterprise is fictional but truthfully developed.
7. The enterprise must have a history so certain rules at the start must operate to establish this, but it always operates in the present presaging its own future as in the real world.
8. Tasks involve people in 'doing' to achieve result/product. Therefore, sessions must feel highly active driven by intention to complete or get on with things. Gradually attitudes emerge until feelings drive the action".

(Heathcote, 1990)

On the basis of these eight rules, the topic 'Looking after animals' will be introduced over a period of eight weeks. The work will develop in two stages.

Stage One: The story "A tale of two bears" (Webb, 1985), for a full version of the story, see Appendix 3, will introduce the children to the topic, create an atmosphere and prepare the curriculum learning environment for the 'Mantle of the Expert' approach.

Stage Two: The 'Mantle of the Expert' approach.

A. Stage One: Familiarisation through story

1. In a whole group meeting the 'Teacher-in-role' (see chapter two) as a Zoo keeper will tell the story to the Nursery staff (who will also be in role as Zoo workers/staff) and to the children. This can replace the conventional narration or reading the story from a book. The performance between the Nursery staff can also add a theatrical dimension of a performance for the children to watch and listen. All staff will introduce their roles and explain what exactly they do in the Zoo.
2. Puppet theatre: use of puppets to familiarise the children with the names of wild animals.
3. Song, music and movement: 'We are going on a bear hunt'.

4. Circle time: in small groups, the family group leaders (Nursery staff) can introduce the two puppet bears from the story to the children's teddy bears or other favourite animal soft toys.
5. Make bear prints and collage of bears.
6. Look at the size and height of bears and compare it with children's and adults' physical dimensions.
7. Working in pairs they would be asked to choose a wild animal which interests them and find out as much as possible about its habits, diet, etc.
8. Two class outings, one to the Natural history Museum and one to Dudley Zoo, in order to supplement research undertaken from the library.
9. Arrange with the Art Co-ordinator to have four sessions with the children in order to help them develop the skills of looking and drawing from observation.

With reference to the Foundation Stage 'Stepping Stones' (Curriculum Guidance, 2000), the diagram below (Figure 7) indicates a holistic and cross-curricular approach to the teaching of skills and objectives through these activities. Specific page number references to the Foundation Stage 'Stepping Stones' document (2000) are noted in brackets in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Foundation Stage Curriculum through story

- 1. Communication, Language and Literacy**
 - ☐ Listen to stories with increasing attention and recall (p.50).
 - ☐ Use vocabulary focused on objects and people who are of particular importance to them (p.52).
 - ☐ Build up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experience (p.52).

- 3. Mathematical development**
 - ☐ Show an interest in numbers and counting (p.74).
 - ☐ Enjoy joining in with number rhymes and songs (p.74)
 - ☐ Use mathematical language in play (p.74).
 - ☐ Order items by height (p.80).
- 4. Knowledge and Understanding of the World**
 - ☐ Show curiosity and interest by facial expression, movement or sound (p.86).
 - ☐ Describe simple features of objects and events (p.86).
 - ☐ Show an interest in the world in which they live in (p.96).

Story
‘A tale of two bears’

- 2. Personal, Social and Emotional development**
 - ☐ Begin to accept the needs of others with support (p.38).
 - ☐ Show care and concern for others (p.38).
 - ☐ Relate and make attachments to members of their group (p.36).

- 5. Physical development**
 - ☐ Respond to rhythm, music and story by means of gesture and movement (p.104).
 - ☐ Move in a range of ways, such as slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping (p. 104).
 - ☐ Use movement to express feelings (p. 104).

- 6. Creative development**
 - ☐ Use their bodies to explore space.
 - ☐ Make three-dimensional structures.
 - ☐ Begin to describe the texture of things.
 - ☐ Use lines to enclose a space, then begin to use these shapes to represent objects.

B. 'Looking after animals' through 'Mantle of the Expert'

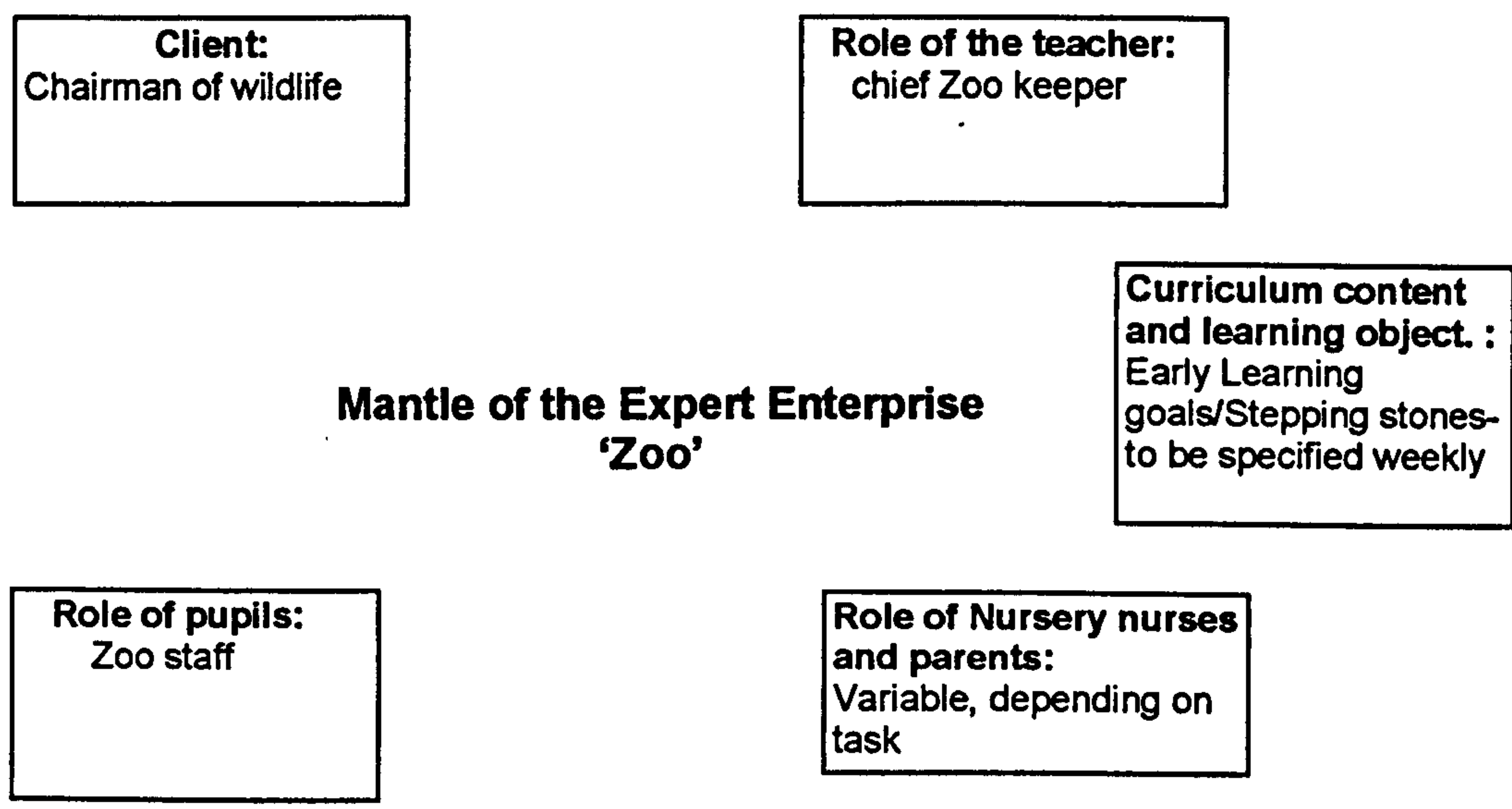
The main aims of the eight weeks project will be to:

- ☐ integrate the process of Drama and Art in support of learning across the curriculum (see chapter two);
- ☐ enable the children to use drawing as a mode of visual enquiry (see Kress in chapter one) for essential research into animals and their habitats;
- ☐ use Drama in order to provide an exciting fictitious context within which the children could utilise what they had learned about animals, and be motivated to find out more (Egan and Nadaner, 1988; Booth, 1994; Winston, 1998);
- ☐ apportion roles within the Drama in such a way that the pupils are the 'experts', and as 'zoologists' they will have to advise others, including teachers, about the special needs of their animals;
- ☐ set up a design task so that it will also become a vehicle for discussion, group decision making, and the exploration of attitudes towards animals and their needs (see Gee and Bruner in chapter one);
- ☐ structure the work so that the pupils would be required to address the ethical issues underpinning the notion of Zoos, while discovering and articulating their own views.

After the initial preparatory work, a letter from the 'Chairman of Wildlife Sanctuary' will arrive asking the children, in role as zoo staff, to look after some animals from another zoo. What do you know about these animals? What do you think that they will need?

The following diagram is an example of the teacher's thinking to facilitate action.

Figure 8. Mantle of the Expert



In the following planning material (Figure 9) the Nursery staff will specify the Early Learning goals, the skills and the curriculum areas to be taught on a weekly basis.

Figure 9: Weekly Planning

Designed by Eleni Kanira used by the Birmingham Advisory Support Service (BASS)

TOPIC/ STORY/ PROJECT WORK					TERM:	DATE:
AREA OF LEARNING:						
EARLY LEARNING GOALS/STEPPING STONES:						
Learning Opportunities (objectives)	Activities AD - Adult Directed CI - Child Initiated AS- Adult Supported	Differentiation	Assessment Opportunities	Key Vocabulary		
EVALUATION:						

Chapter Six

Conclusions

Drama in Education - The Way Forward

This chapter will include a summary of the results from the research project, and a discussion of the main advantages of using Drama in Education as a teaching and learning methodology. A brief account of the implications of this way of working and recommendations for the follow up to this research project will be included.

Early Years is a pivotal yet largely unrecognised area of a child's education in the UK. The study demonstrated the importance of positive learning experiences in Early Years settings and identified the central role of language in the holistic development of children. Advanced language skills facilitate the development of a creative and critical attitude, leading to constructive interaction with the environment and wider world around us.

This thesis explored language as a social construct and as interaction between the child and the environment, and proposed a holistic approach to the teaching of language in Early Years education through the media of discourse and drama. The main advantage of using Drama in Education as a teaching and learning methodology in Early Years education is that it

facilitates children's imaginative, intellectual, personal, social and physical development in a holistic way (see chapters one and two). It humanises the curriculum through the creation of meaningful tasks. Comprehension is increased and children are enabled to make connections to their own life, thereby leading to authentic learning. More specifically, drama facilitates the integration of oral language, reading and writing in a coherent language learning process. Each of these functions draws from and feeds into the others to form an interrelated process of language learning. This supports a trend away from the fragmented approach to language learning and emphasises an active process of meaningful discourse-making. The model proposed in Chapter Five advocates a holistic view of learning, where an integrated approach is envisaged in each subject area and across the subject divides, facilitated through a whole language approach using Drama methodology.

The thesis identified that the ability to express oneself is an essential life skill. Learning to use language for the purpose of everyday social interaction: greeting, expressing sympathy or appreciation, welcoming visitors is an important element of literacy (Goodman and Burke, 1980), as is developing cognitive abilities through language. The ability to listen and assimilate meaning and the ability to read and comprehend are key factors in the learning process. Through the use of Drama in Education as recommended in this thesis, the child is encouraged to ask questions, to predict outcomes and to discuss solutions to problems, all of which are of paramount importance in modern society where children are presented with many choices and opportunities (see chapter two). Emotional and imaginative development through language cultivates the child's personality

and potential. Children come to a deeper understanding of themselves and of their relationships with others (see self-spectator construct in chapter two), thereby developing the affective side of their personality. Young children's receptiveness to language is concerned with their willingness and ability to listen, thereby enabling them to take part in appropriate listener-speaker relationships. The model proposed in Chapter five aims to improve children's communication skills and their competence and confidence in using language which will develop their ability to use language as a speaker, a reader and a writer.

In this study Drama in Education is referred to in relation to pedagogical practice, and the implications of the model discussed in Chapter Five demonstrates that drama and discourse have a central role to play in the transformation of the practice of education in Early Years settings. Traditionally, narrative and drama refers to the practice of telling stories or constructing linguistic patterns out of the randomness of experience. In this thesis I argued that the understanding of drama has become 'naturalised' in terms of how to apply it in practice, resulting in a notion of drama that functions as a restrictive and simulative force in the classroom. The act of meaning-making and creativity is severely constrained in many classrooms by the need to accept the conditions of the narrative pattern. In order to instigate a form of practice that engages the child in a creative way, it will be necessary to alter the concept of drama and narrative as traditionally understood. With this in view, I proposed the application of social theories of language to the notion of Drama in Education, resulting in a tentative model of practice. This thesis argued that the notion of pedagogical practice is currently characterised by a teaching style that fixes knowledge into static

narrative patterns. These fixed patterns of ideas are 'transmitted' to the children. Thus, learning occurs within rigid parameters. I argued that in order to bring about an interactive, collaborative paradigm of learning, the approach to the practice of teaching and learning language in Early Years will need to be modified as indicated in the model outlined in Chapter Five.

It is important to note that the ideas outlined in Chapter Five in the section entitled: 'Practical considerations for the development of language in Early Years' does not claim to be a complete model. As was clearly indicated, certain mitigating factors necessitated a significant shift in focus from the originally intended action research component of this study. Therefore, what is offered is a tentative model of practice which provides Early Years practitioners with a practical framework through which to interpret the recently launched national curriculum guidelines for the foundation stage (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, 2000). The model draws on best practice in the field of Drama in Education, which was earlier identified (see Chapters 2 and 4) as being a highly effective teaching and learning strategy with which to realise the laudable aims of this curriculum.

A summary of the major concerns that emerged from this research are as follows:

1. Emphasis on the development of language in early childhood education should be given to speech, social play, playful talk and discourse, because these forms of oral communication contain the child's meaningful relationship with the world, culture and history, which is a prerequisite for any form of action including successful graphic

representation, drawing, reading and writing (see Gee, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978; Gardner and Wolf, 1980; Kress, 1997; Halliday, 1978 and Bruner, 1972).

2. Drama in Education contains the methodological tools to teach the whole curriculum and develop a model for children's discourse-making in Early Years. As dramatic play is an action and speech oriented activity (see Bruner, 1972), the use of selected strategies and techniques can set up situational contexts for learning, structure the teaching process and stimulate the child's imagination and wonder at all levels of personal and social development (physically, emotionally, culturally and linguistically) (see Gee, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978; Gardner and Wolf, 1980; Kress, 1997; Halliday, 1978; Bruner, 1976; Johnson and O'Neill, 1984 and Neelands, 1992).
3. In order to construct a new educational model, the following points are important.
 - a) Tracing the path of educational history can reveal significant information about the current cultural and political state of education in which curriculum documents are produced and the content of the curriculum determined.
 - b) Educational changes, such as the development of a model to teach language in Early Years, can not exist as a universal model for the teaching of language. It is not possible, nor desirable to devise a universal model in such a manner because the cultural and political needs of each institution differ. Although it is worth noting that models can formulate theoretical principals to underpin

local and regional documentation, and assist practice in small scale projects such as the situational and cultural context of a particular school (see Fullan, 1991; Gallagher, 2001 and Britzman, 1991).

- c) Any action to develop a new model or improve the quality of existing practice in an educational institution will have to evolve from the culture and the structure of the whole school. This will require re-structuring roles and re-organising responsibilities which involve many members of the community, parents, pupils and staff (Fullan, 1991). In this context, Drama in Education can facilitate change through such teaching devices as Teacher-in-Role and Mantle of the Expert, where the teacher can actively involve many people of different ages in the learning process (see Johnson and O'Neill, 1984; Neelands, 1990; Bolton, 1984; 1992 and Fleming, 1994).

The comparative study of three Early Years curricular documents in their different cultural and political domains (Chapter four) recommended that the British Government needs to recognise and finance more specialised training at local and University level for educators in the field, with particular emphasis on the history, theory, and development of innovative pedagogy in Early Years education. It also needs to support the development of programmes for international educational visits to facilitate the exchange of ideas, learning methods and good practice.

Currently, in the Early Years curriculum in the United Kingdom (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation stage, 2000) language studies is not generally

integrated into the general body of the curriculum. However, the research revealed that there is an emergent political will to implement child-centred theory and practice in the curriculum but considerable re-structuring efforts would have to be undertaken at many levels first: from the unclear and ambivalent language of texts to the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the community, the universities, and so on.

Future research

It has been shown that Drama in Education can be a methodological tool to teach language and facilitate learning in early childhood education, and can be used in any educational setting if training and expertise are provided. My future research will be based upon an action research project, using the stimulus of a particular story or cultural event to involve members of the whole community in a learning process that will utilise the theory as evolved through this study and the curriculum learning expectations outlined in relevant regional, national and international documentation.

Conclusion

Drama in Education has much to offer in terms of the development of children's discourse-making. By altering our approaches to pedagogy, we can pave the way for a rejuvenated practice of language development in the classroom. Transformation in pedagogy involving a Drama in Education based approach allows for greater student participation and results in the creation of a child-centred classroom space. Drama enables the teacher to address a wider range of learning styles among pupils. There are no fixed expectations in drama. It allows for personal emphasis and creativity, and it encourages exploration rather than conformity. Drama is concerned with

education for living. It gives pupils real life skills by fostering an inquiring mind, enabling thinking for oneself, making choices and applying knowledge, all important life skills which will support the child's successful entry to primary level education.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Document 1: Community School, Early Years, Long term planning 2001-2002

Community School
Early Years

LONG TERM PLANNING

Academic Year 2001/2002

The long term planning is based upon “stepping stones” of progress towards achieving the early learning goals of the foundation stage. This gives a more detailed theoretical and practical guide to the learning context and topics to be covered during each half term as introduced with the long term planning.

The long term planning is designed around topic work. The topic work will implement suggestions as indicated by the local education authority in a three year long term plan. It will also allow space for the practitioners in our setting to:

- be creative and imaginative,
- plan topics and projects in communication and negotiation with pupils so that work is suitably matched to pupils’ needs
- provide opportunities for them to use their observations and assessments in planning the next steps in pupils’ learning.

The long term planning is designed to support our practitioners in the following areas:

A. Planning for the terms:

*To implement the curriculum requirements as set up by the DFEE in the Early Learning Goals (1999) and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000).

* To have an overview of the areas of learning which practitioners have already explored and plan the next step.

* To build experiences on what children already know, enjoy and can do.

* To facilitate a challenging learning environment for structured play activities by organising resources in advance.

* To provide various opportunities for all pupils to learn through their senses.

* To support children’s learning through planned play activities.

* To extend and support children’s spontaneous play.

*To extend and develop children’s language communication and mathematical awareness in their play.

B. Delivering:

* To deliver well-planned and purposeful activities by thinking ahead, when possible, of appropriate intervention techniques which will engage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning.

* To inform parents and outside agencies about curriculum matters where their contribution in and out of the school setting will benefit children’s learning.

* To help practitioners identify in advance curriculum links with the real world and therefore lead pupils’ learning actively forward as well as help them to reflect on what they have already learned.

* To support practitioners with the many aspects of teaching such as planning and creating the learning environment, organising time and material resources, interacting, questioning, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children’s progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents.

C. Assessing:

- * To identify the next step in children's learning and plan how to help children make progress against recognised criteria.**
- * To identify and evaluate children's developmental and curriculum needs and inform the weekly planning with appropriate activities which meet the diverse needs of individuals and groups such as more able pupils, SEN pupils, children with English as a second language, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups.**
- * To identify children's barriers to learning and help overcome them.**

The process of planning, delivering and assessing documentation -namely listening, observing, gathering documents and interpreting them- is very important. Therefore, observations of children in their interaction with the indoor and outdoor learning environment play a significant role. Observations of children will help us to listen to the children, learn about them, instruct their learning following their needs, abilities and imagination and negotiate their learning with them.

We view the process of observation as much more than simply perceiving reality, but also constructing, interpreting and revisiting it. For our observations we use written notes, observation charts, diaries, and other narrative forms, as well as audiotapes, photographs, slides and videotapes. These allow us to make visible the process of children's learning, the ways to construct knowledge, the emotional and relational aspects. However, it is important to note that all these documents provide partial findings and subjective interpretations, and they are biased by the tools employed. In turn, they must be reinterpreted and discussed with others, in particular, with colleagues.

In the Early Years settings we will operate a child-centred and flexible programme where group leaders will have the opportunity to work with their own group e.g. topics, walks, cooking, physical education using the school hall or during a specific project. However, on a daily schedule, our weekly planning will be delivered by our practitioners (teachers and nursery nurses) who will equally share between them the following roles and responsibilities:

- 1. Two members of staff per week on focus activities.**
- 2. Two learning managers per week.**
- 3. One practical manager per week.**

These roles will change every week.

- 1. By having two foci for a whole week, with two members of staff, there will be continuity, development, quality, and chances for children to revisit and develop the activity.**

2. The role of the learning manager:

To plan and support independent learning opportunities. - To begin with, in the Autumn term, these will be “basic experiences” where children can learn e.g. ‘how to put duplo together’ or ‘how to use a pair of scissors’. By the end of the term we hope to identify (from observations) where children’s interests lie and offering support in their learning in the six areas (QCA Goals). On a regular basis the learning managers will:

- discuss how the independent play went,
- decide whether the children are still interested / need more experience,
- decide how to develop the opportunity tomorrow (by imputing additional resources) or
- decide to offer a new activity and
- set up for the next day.

This approach will ensure that appropriate resources are available for independent play, and that learning managers have responsibility for evaluating the day’s learning, and getting resources ready for the next day.

3. The role of the practical manager:

This role aims to ensure that the learning environment both indoors and outdoors is functioning in order to motivate and stimulate learning. This involves the following responsibilities:

- smooth running of the timetable,
- preparation for snack time; this may involve working with a small group of children,
- maintenance of the kitchen area (washing cups and maintaining hygiene standards),
- administration, answering the door and telephone,
- changing children,
- interacting with children (delegating responsibilities and observations),
- preparation of staff drinks.

Following the ‘stepping stones’ as guidance for our Foundation stage, our *Medium term document* has been devised for three groups of children in our Early Years setting, Playgroup/Nursery (2 and a half - 4 year olds), Nursery (3-4 year olds) and Reception (4-5 year olds).

The first column shows progression from age three to the end of the foundation stage and can be used for assessment of groups and individuals. The second column indicates what teaching should enhance so that pupils will learn and achieve. A third column has been added from the Curriculum framework for the

Foundation stage (2000), Coventry LEA, to facilitate our practitioners' short-term planning.

In the Playgroup learning is based on *exploration* of the opportunities for learning. In the Nursery it is based on *familiarisation* with the opportunities for learning and in Reception, learning is based on *consolidation* and *application* of the opportunities for learning.

The last column shows how progression can be achieved from Playgroup to Reception in the form of ideas based on selected topics which will deliver the Curriculum. In future half-term planning the first three columns will remain the same whilst the last column on topics and ideas will change.

This is because we believe that children develop holistically throughout the six areas of learning, children's learning can not be compartmentalised and that children may be learning within these areas anywhere in their setting.

It is important to state that moving from stages A,B and C is fluid because not all children learn and progress in the same way.

The education of all three year groups is based on the same principles and philosophy. Topic work is used as a starting point for learning in order to provide an appropriate context 'holding form' for pupils' learning.

Suggestions for broad topics that generate knowledge on issues as part of pupils' life such as, seasons, festivals, etc., will be offered throughout the academic year. However, practitioners will be able to implement in future planning topics which arise from their own and pupils' interests or during the process of assessment. The delivery of the day-to-day activities will be based on practitioners' individual planning. This will meet the assessment criteria as set up in this document, in baseline assessment and other assessment documents designed by the authority or subject co-ordinators for particular subject areas and will specify group and individual learning needs.

Planning is not static, it demands a professional approach in deciding which groups of pupils/individuals need more time in realising their learning.

1st term
Topics: "Myself" - "Festivals".

2nd term
Topics: "Colours" - "Changes" .

3rd term
Topics: "Journeys" - "Water".

The emphasis of the first term's work can be summarised as follows:

- We get to know the child, their family, their likes and dislikes, and what they can do.
- The child gets to know us, the people, the building and the grounds, and the equipment.
- The children get to know each other, those in their family groups, and those in other groups.

During the first term practitioners in Nursery and Reception classes will carry out **Baseline assessment** which will have to be completed by the end of the first half-term. However, we realise that, the importance of the assessment for future judgments on pupils' progress and the fact that we do not know the pupils well enough, requires well-planned and sophisticated activities. These will aim to create an interesting and stimulating environment which will reveal the children's potential, will welcome the children and their parents and will facilitate in a natural way the assessment process. We must ensure that assessments are not culturally biased and allow all pupils to succeed.

Other assessment for the first half-term is recorded on the child's individual Initial profile. We recognise that assessment is a **team activity**, and all staff have input to the records of all children.

IDEAS

Personal, Social and Emotional development:

- Taking part in discussion and decisions relating to snack time.
- Circle time activities using objects such as passing a puppet around, throwing a ball, to get to know each other by name.
- Circle time/family meetings discussion, role play attitudes and dispositions (teacher models in role) to develop social rules (indoors/outdoors) routines and promote imaginative social role-play.
- Negotiation through role-play of the rules or conventions of the play.
- Children helping to choose, set up, tidy up activities.
- Exploration of different ways to use classroom equipment.
- Take off and put on outer clothing.
- Encourage attitude of taking turns and share through interactive involvement with children in activities, indirect questioning, in role-play and through drama.
- Managing their personal hygiene (use soap, tissue, towel, etc.).
- Using puppets and role play to explore relationships between peers and adults in the setting.
- Using stories as a stimulus for drama to explore emotions, feelings, attitudes, build self-esteem, confidence and social relationships.
- Use other forms of art, such as puppets, music, singing, drawing, painting, clay, play dough to explore personal and social relationships.
- Challenge curiosity through problem-solving- 'I wonder'- situations using story as a stimulus for drama and role play in all six areas of learning.
- Reinforce social relationships through walks around the school building. Use the outdoor space for picnic, ring games, social games (hide and seek) recording of sounds, children's voices, etc.
- Set up caring attitude and responsibility towards others through gardening and planting.

Communication, language and Literacy

- Develop a theme area such as a party, three bears' house, cooking sessions that will match yours and the children's interests. Use favourite stories as a stimulus for setting up these fictitious contexts. Use Teacher in Role (various significant story characters). These characters will make use of dramatic tension, significant objects from the story to promote communication (speaking and listening skills), language for thinking and early reading writing skills. In these contexts the practitioners can set up meetings with the children, play games, challenge children to sort out the problem of what the story character has done. Listen to children's ideas and suggestions and

develop your observation and assessment and make learning for them a cross-curricular activity which will provide opportunities for communication all the time. Enable through direct communication and through drama children's curiosity and direct them to seek out information from various sources adults, books, ICT. These kinds of activities work across the six areas of learning.

- Circle time, puppet theatre, read stories, share books and stories and learn songs.
- Children can bring in, share and talk with others about personal objects from home with significant value to them such as, toys, photographs, books.
- Ask parents to provide you with family photographs and their child's baby photo and explore creatively and imaginatively time and change (History), measure (maths). Identify children's interests through this topic. Set up a project and an interesting display which will derive from the children's interest and knowledge around these topics.
- Introduce in your family groups the idea of a newspaper (e.g. a white board or a big book) where you share important news daily. This can be an opportunity for the practitioner to demonstrate writing and reading skills. When children are ready can be encouraged to draw and /or write their own news independently. This activity may also be used for plenary.
- Develop an interesting and comfortable writing, reading and library corner. Explore and develop through subtle intervention pencil control and hand writing.
- Develop short daily sessions for phonic work e.g. phonic tape, singing, phonics games, rhymes, songs (indoors and outdoors). Try to make these activities part of a drama or story so that the children will experience learning in context.
- Children will need to experiment with writing indoors and outdoors through structured play and drama as well as independently. An always available blackboard outdoors, a well resourced writing area can provide these opportunities in free play activities.
- Through songs and interactive activities daily, introduce days of the week, seasons, weather. Have a calendar in the writing area and in the meeting area and refer to it when appropriate.
- Create an interesting listening centre.

Mathematical development

- Observe numbers and patterns in the outdoor and indoor environment. Provide children with stimuli for pattern work such as patterns in books, shapes in context, in art, in daily life, in music (rhythms, tunes, repetition in verse) and colours. Develop pattern work through cooking activities, drawings, paintings. Create music and record it afterwards.
- Sing action songs and number rhymes and observe patterns in verse.
- Play number games using props and numerals for counting. Reinforce counting in daily activities indoors and outdoors.

- Set up a toy shop with the children. Decorate it using patterns. Label it using numbers, letters and possibly children's own writing. 'What toys should we sell?' 'How many of each group of toys?' (Develop sorting, matching, ordering skills). Use a variety of contexts for number and pattern work such as, house area, shop area, walk at the local shop, walk around the school. Observe, count and record numbers.
- Play together with children and experiment with a range of materials and equipment such as lego toys, unifix cubes, play dough and cutters, etc.
- Number walk, number puzzles, snack and dinner time. Cut and count fruits, count biscuits, shoes, socks, buttons.
- Use water and sand play indoors and outdoors. Hide interesting objects in the sand, count them.
- Measure the children as they arrive in the new setting. Make graphs with children's different heights. Develop this activity throughout the year.

Knowledge and Understanding of the world

- Create a gardening area or make use of the school's garden. Plant herbal plants which can stimulate work on the senses, discuss, growing and compare it with people and animals (babies- children-adults-old people). Observe and predict. Seek information about the needs of the plants. Create and explore problem-solving situations e.g. 'What do plants need? What can we do about it? I wonder what will happen if... Where can we find more about it? How did it happen? What is it? Use language to communicate meaning and seek for information all the time.
- Use ICT to explore the topic and other topics which you arise from working with the children. Use computer programme to draw and paint faces. - Develop mouse control skills and familiarise the children with IT.
- Use mirrors to observe and draw own faces. Make faces with paper plates, face masks, etc.
- Time lines: past and present. Use Drama to remember and talk about significant events from stories and own life.
- Use light table (science table) and stimulate the senses through objects relevant to topic work, colours. Develop a creative area around the table from children's own interests. Provide a microscope, magnifying glasses for observation and record children's investigations in circle time or during the activity using tape recorder.
- Look at various maps real ones and carpet maps. Using the idea of map work reinforce children's observational skills. Devise with the children the classroom environment, a story setting, the toy shop, etc.

Physical development

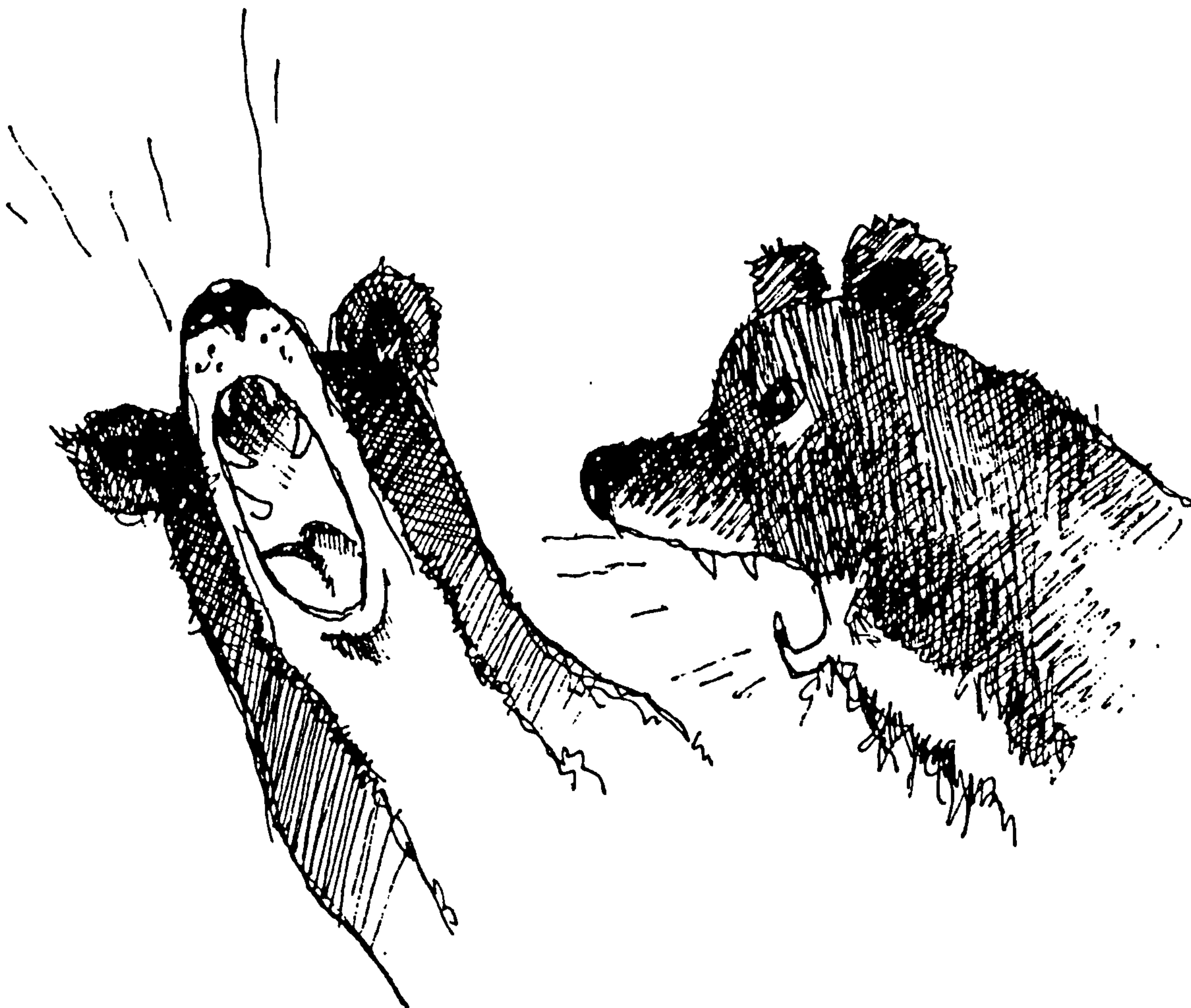
- Draw with chalk on the playground a variety of large faces with flowing hair. Use them for aiming games and for walking on the lines (pre-writing activity).
- Dance: Explore movement of different parts of the body.
- Health education related to physical development such as running and hearing the beat of your heart, breathing, pulse rate.
- Traditional playground games.
- Dressing and undressing.
- Listening and responding to action songs and rhymes.
- Engage in activities requiring hand -eye co-ordination such as, throwing, catching, kicking, aiming, balancing.
- Use of the 'Top Start' playing equipment.
- Play games to encourage a variety of different actions such as jump, walk, hop, skip, crawl, and change direction and action.

Creative Development

- Make masks to explore feelings and develop drama and role play about social personal attitudes and dispositions.
- Using their senses the children can explore a range of painting and drawing tools and materials.
- Experiment with Music and Movement such as dancing with ribbons.
- Face drawing using mirrors. Explore how faces change when feelings change.
- Make 'feelings music' using musical instruments.
- Explore feelings through stories and explore characters' feelings through dance, drama, music, drawing, painting.
- Puppet theatre: Make puppets and write together a short play for their friends to perform.
- Clay work.
- On paper plate use tissue paper to make a healthy meal. Print with vegetables and hard fruits.
- Hand, feet, finger printings. Use printings for maths and language work.
- Singing favourite songs and learn new ones.
- Explore which parts of the body can be used to make sounds to accompany songs e.g. clap, tap, click fingers, sniff, whistle, stamp, slap thighs, tap teeth and so on.

Eleni Kanira, September,2001

Appendix B: Document 2: The story 'a tale of two bears'



A TALE OF TWO BEARS

Theme: Sharing

There were once two big brown bears called Bruno and Ed. As you probably know, brown bears like to hibernate during the winter months and this particular cold, Autumn day Bruno and Ed met at the entrance to a very inviting cave. Bruno was dragging behind him a cluster of branches to seal off the entrance to the cave.

"Good day to you," said Ed, politely. "Where might you be going this cold day?"

"I'm getting my cave ready for the Winter," said Bruno. "I've been feeling a little sleepy of late so I thought I would bed down for a few months."

"Oh, but there must be some mistake," said Ed looking surprised. "This is my cave. I use it every year!"

Bruno dropped his branches and gave Ed an icy stare. He put his big brown hands on his big brown hips and said: "Well, you can't use it this year because I found it first."

"Oh, but there must be some mistake," repeated Ed. "I've already made my bed inside."

Bruno's eyes widened. He was a very short tempered brown bear at the best of times.

"I'm afraid," he said slowly, "you will just have to un-make your bed. It's my cave and I'm going to sleep in it!"

"Oh, but you can't do that," said Ed.

"I always sleep there and I couldn't bear to leave it."

Bruno could control himself no longer. He jumped up and down twice, picked out the largest branch from his pile and hit Ed over the head with it.

Now Ed was a little slow at times but he was by no means soft. If anything he was bigger than Bruno and nobody was going to hit him with a branch and get away with it. He took one step forward, put his huge arms around Bruno's waist and gave him the biggest, tightest, longest bear hug he could muster! Bruno growled and roared and boxed Ed's ears and the two of them wrestled and fought, falling over each other in their attempts to gain the upper hand. The fight lasted a good ten minutes until eventually the two bears collapsed in a heap, battered and exhausted.

As they lay recovering, a gentle voice sounded from the cave entrance. The two bears looked up to see the familiar shape of William, a wise old bear who was well respected by everyone.

"Perhaps," said William, "you would both like to share my cave with me for the winter. There is plenty of room for the three of us and you do look in need of a good rest."

William turned his back and trundled off into the depths of the cave leaving Bruno and Ed to think about how silly and how selfish they had been.